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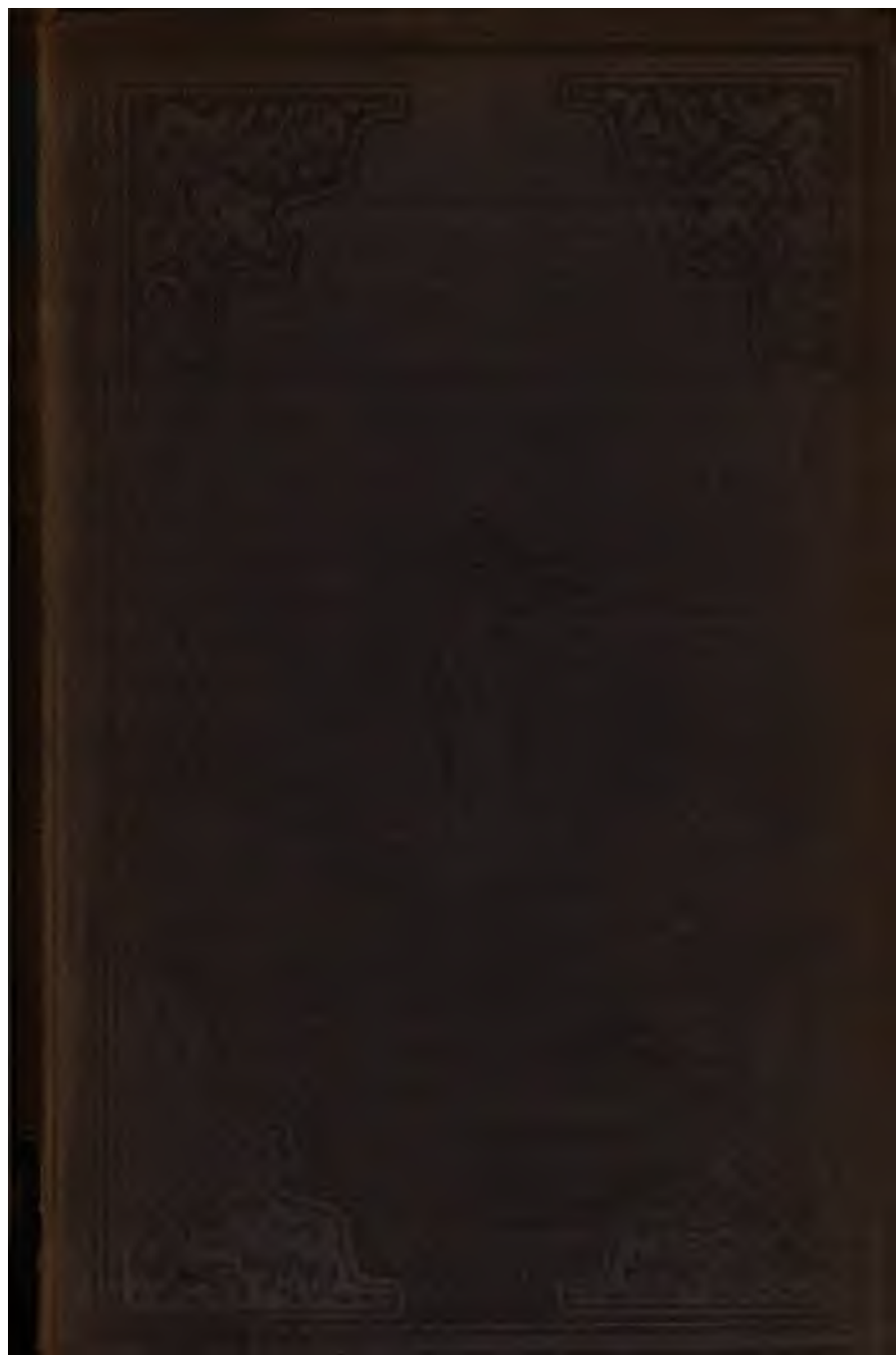
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**Adden Readings**

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## PREFACE.

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IN the season of Lent, 1852, a small Volume was put forth, entitled, "Lent Readings from the Fathers," and a promise was then given that it should be followed by similar selections for Advent.

This promise is now fulfilled, and "Readings" suited to each day of Advent are here put together, for the benefit, it is hoped, of such devotional minds as may wish to find the Church's teaching in the earlier ages.

There is a double sense attached to this holy season, which the Church Services plainly set forth, and therein a double duty in its commemoration. The one of joy, as contemplating the Redemption of the world, *which is past*; the other of awfulness, as contemplating the coming of Christ to Judgment, *which is future*. In the former we call to mind what the world was; in the latter we anticipate what it is to be. We may indeed dwell in wonder upon the past ungodliness of men, when Christ was not yet among them in the flesh; but we are also called upon to consider whether, although Christ *has* come in the flesh once, and has taught us by His Life, and redeemed us by His Death, we



ourselves are now in such a state of readiness for His second coming—such a state of advancement in His Faith, as might be expected from the privileges of His Teaching.

The *object* of Christ's future coming is before the mind, namely, to judge; and therein finally and for all eternity to appoint every man's place in the Resurrection either of the just or of the unjust; while the *subject* is before us equally momentous and fearful, namely, our own readiness to meet Him. It is this readiness to meet Him which embraces all else, filling us with dread in the thought of unrepented sin, but at the same time cheering us on in the labours of our holy calling, when we think that in His very Presence, amid the Saints and Angels, and Heavenly Host, there will at "that day" be manifested our exceeding great reward.

*Are we ready to meet Him at His coming?* How do our lives, our actions, our words, our thoughts, our tempers, our daily ways, our goings out and comings in—how do they all practically agree with a faith which abstractedly teaches us that the day of the Lord cometh as a thief in the night? Our bodies may sleep in death for ages, awaiting His coming in the grave, or He may anticipate our death, and find us quick upon the earth. But in either case

there will be the same judgment, and that judgment will embrace the very same things done in the flesh by us. Are we ready for either of these cases?

It will be found that the passages here selected from the Fathers, bear on these points. Whatever is involved in human sin, its causes by temptation, or its effects in punishment, is analysed and exposed. The *certainty* of punishment. The *Eternity* of punishment. The judgment by which the punishment will be awarded. *Who* the Judge is to be that is to pronounce the judgment. The warnings which He has vouchsafed concerning it. *What* He is to judge. *When* He is to judge, and *How* He is to judge. Hell contrasted with Heaven. The wicked with the good. Man with God. Time with Eternity. Of all this the Fathers delighted to speak; and through all, the heart of man is laid bare with an unsparing probe; and even as our Lord taught without respect of persons, so they imitating Him, bring out into light the secrets of all hearts; and the sins and follies of the great ones of the earth, as well as those of the poor and simple ones, are faithfully exposed, so that all may see them, and seeing them, hate and loathe them, and while yet in God's mercy they are spared, forsake them.

It is not God's vengeance on the sinner, but his restoration to holiness, that a true idea of the great Day of Christ's coming is to represent. The terrors of the Lord are set forth indeed, but not solely as terrors—not solely as topics of declamation for the preacher—but for this great end, (which is indeed the end of all God's dealings with man,) to make His Mercy and Love in Christ the surer and the brighter.

Let us use Advent, then, as God of His infinite mercy wills it, and the Church, following His word, teaches. There must be abstinence. There must be retirement. There must be thoughtfulness about our state. God may be nearer to us than we imagine. We may see Him sooner than we think. While we speculate about Heaven and Hell their realities may be close at hand. While we indulge fancies and theories about the time and the manner, the knock may be heard at the door.

Let us live as though we heard it. Let us pray. Let us communicate with Him, and with our brethren, and with the Church, His Body, as though to-morrow we shall see Him in the glory of His coming.

W. I. E. B.

*Vicarage, Frome-Selwood,  
Eve of S. Matthew, 1853.*

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## First Sunday in Advent.

### THE DAY OF JUDGMENT.

S. CYRIL OF JERUSALEM.

LET us wait and look for the Lord's coming upon the clouds from heaven. Then shall the Angelic trumpets sound; "the dead in Christ shall rise first," the religious persons who are alive shall be caught up in the clouds, receiving as the reward of their labours, more than human honour, inasmuch as their's was a more than human strife; according as the apostle Paul writes, saying, "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are left and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

This coming of the Lord, and the end of the world, was known to the Preacher; who says, "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth," and in what follows; "Therefore remove anger from thy heart, and put away evil from thy flesh; . . . and remember thy Creator . . . while the evil days come not, . . . while the sun, or the light, or the moon,

or the stars be not darkened, . . . and those that look out of the windows be not darkened; (covertly meaning the faculty of sight;) or ever the silver cord be loosed; (he speaks of the assemblage of the stars, for their appearance is like silver;) and the flower of gold be bruised; (thus veiling the mention of the golden sun; for this flower is a well-known plant, having many ray-like leaves shooting out round it;) and they rise up at the voice of the bird, and they see from the height, and terrors be in the way." What shall they see? "Then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven; and they shall mourn tribe by tribe." And what shall come to pass when the Lord is come? "The almond tree shall blossom, and the grasshopper shall grow in substance, and the briar shall be scattered abroad." And, as the interpreter says, the blossoming almond signifies the departure of winter; and our bodies shall, after the winter, blossom with an heavenly flower. And the grasshopper shall grow in substance, (that means the winged soul clothing itself with the body;) and the briar shall be scattered abroad, (the transgressors, who are like thorns, shall be scattered.)

Thou seest how they all anticipate the coming of the Lord—thou seest how they know the voice of the bird. Let us know what sort of voice this is, "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God;" the Archangel shall shout

aloud, and say to all, Rise to meet the Lord ; and fearful will be that descent of our Master. David says, " Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence ; a fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about Him," and the rest.

The Son of Man shall come to the Father, according to the text, with the clouds of heaven, and with a stream of fire, which is to try men, following as His train. Then if any man's works are of gold, he shall be made brighter ; if any man's course of life be like stubble, and without substance, he shall be burned by the fire. And the Father " shall sit " having " His garment white as snow, and the hair of His head like the pure wool." And this is spoken after the manner of men : wherefore ? Because He is the King of those who are not defiled with sins ; for He says, " your sins shall be as white as snow, and shall be as wool," which is the emblem of the forgiveness of sins, or of sinlessness itself. But the same Lord shall come from heaven in the clouds Who ascended in the clouds ; for He Himself hath said, " and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory." But some one present will say, " I am a poor man, or again, I shall perhaps be found at that time sick and in bed,"—or " I am but a woman, and I shall be taken at the mill ; shall we then be despised ? " Be of good courage, O man ; the Judge is no respecter of persons ; " He will not judge according to a man's appearance, nor reprove according to his speech." He honours not the learned



before the simple, nor the rich before the needy. Though thou be in the field the Angels shall take thee ; think not that He will take the landlord, and will leave thee, the farmer. Though thou be a slave, though thou be poor, be not any whit distressed ; He who took the form of a servant, despises not servants. Though thou be laid sick upon thy bed, yet it is written, " Then shall two be in one bed ; the one shall be taken, and the other left." Though thou be of necessity put to grind, whether thou be man or woman ; though thou have children and sit beside the mill, yet He, " who by His might, bringeth out them that are bound," overlooks thee not. He who brought forth Joseph out of ward and bondage to a kingdom, redeems thee also from thy afflictions into the Kingdom of Heaven. Only be of good cheer, only work, only strive cheerfully ; for nothing is lost. Every prayer of thine, every psalm thou singest is recorded ; every alms-deed, every fast is recorded ; every marriage duly observed is recorded ; continence kept for God's sake is recorded ; but the first crowns in record are those of virginity and purity ; and thou shalt shine as an Angel. But as thou hast gladly listened to the good things, listen without shrinking to the contrary. Every covetous deed of thine is recorded ; every act of fornication is recorded against thee, every false oath of thine is recorded, every blasphemy, every sorcery, every theft, every murder.

All these things are henceforth recorded, if thou

do them after having been baptized ; for thy former deeds are blotted out.

“ When the Son of Man,” He says, “ shall come in His glory, and all the Angels with Him.” Behold, O man, before what multitudes thou shalt come to judgment ;—the whole race of men will then be present. Reckon, therefore, the numbers of the Roman nation ; reckon the numbers of all the barbarian tribes now living, and of those who have died within the last hundred years ; reckon how many nations have been buried during the last thousand years ; reckon all from Adam to this day. Great indeed is the multitude ; but yet it is little, for the Angels are many more : they are “ the ninety and nine sheep,” but mankind is the single “ one.” For according to the extent of universal space must we reckon the number of its inhabitants. The whole earth is but as a point in the midst of this one heaven ; and the heaven which encircles it contains as great a multitude of inhabitants as it has extent. And the heaven of heavens contains unimaginable numbers. And it is written, “ Thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him ;” not that the multitude was only so great, but the Prophet could not express more than these. And then will be present at the judgment, God, the Father of all, Jesus Christ being seated with Him, and the Holy Ghost being with Them ; and the Angelic trumpet shall summon all of us, bearing our deeds.

Ought we not then now to be sore troubled at this? Think it not a slight doom, O man, putting punishment apart, to be condemned in the presence of so many? Shall we not then choose rather to die many deaths than be condemned by friends? Let us shudder then, brethren, lest God condemn us, who needs not enquiry or proofs, to condemn. Say not in the night I committed fornication, or wrought sorcery, or did any other thing, and there was no man by. Out of thine own conscience shalt thou be judged, thy "thoughts the meanwhile accusing, or else excusing, in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men." The terrible countenance of the Judge will force thee to speak the truth; or rather, even though thou speak not, it will convict thee. For thou shalt rise clothed with thy own sins, or else thy righteousness. And this has the Judge Himself declared, saying, (for it is Christ Who judges, for "the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son," not divesting Himself of His power, but judging through the Son; therefore the Son judgeth by the will of the Father; for the will of the Father and of the Son are not different, but one and the same;) what then says the Judge, as to whether thou shalt bear thy works or no? "And before Him shall they gather all nations:" for in the presence of Christ "every knee must bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth:" "and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth the

sheep from the goats." How does the shepherd make the separation? Does he examine out of a book which is a sheep and which a goat? or does he distinguish by their plain marks? Does not the wool show the sheep, and the hairy and rough skin the goat? In like manner if thou hast now been cleansed from thy sins, thy deeds shall be henceforth as pure wool; and thy robe shall remain unstained, and thou shalt even say, "I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on?"

By thy vesture shalt thou be known for a sheep. But if thou be found hairy, like Esau, who was rough with hair, and wicked in mind, who for food lost his birthright, and sold his privilege, thou shalt be among those on the left hand. But God forbid that any here present should be an outcast from grace, or for his evil deeds be found on the left hand, among the ranks of sinners!

Terrible in good truth is the judgment, and terrible is the news of it. The kingdom of heaven is before us, and everlasting fire is made ready. How then, some one will say, should we escape the fire? and how should we enter into the kingdom? "I was an hungred," He says, "and ye gave me meat;" learn now the way; there is here no need of allegory, but to fulfil what is said; "I was an hungred and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison and ye came unto me."

These things if thou do, thou shalt reign together with Him ; but if thou do them not, thou shalt be condemned. At once then begin to work these things, and abide in the Faith ; lest like the foolish virgins, tarrying to buy oil, thou be shut out. Be not confident because thou merely possessest the lamp, but constantly keep it burning. Let the light of thy good works shine before men, and let not Christ be blasphemed on thy account. Wear thou the garment of incorruption, resplendent with good works ; and that which thou hast received from God, to dispense as a steward, dispense thou profitably. Hast thou been put in trust with riches ? Dispense them well. Hast thou been entrusted with the word of teaching ? Be a good steward thereof. Canst thou bring over to the Church the souls of the hearers ? Do this diligently. There are many doors of good stewardship ; only let none of us be condemned and cast out ; so we may with boldness meet Christ the Everlasting King, who reigns for ever. For He reigns for ever, Who, having died for quick and dead, shall be judge of quick and dead. And as also Paul says, "For to this end Christ both died, and rose again and revived, that He might be Lord both of the dead and living."

S. Cyril. Catechetical Lectures, xv. 19.

**First Monday.****THE SECOND ADVENT.****S. CHRYSOSTOM.**

WOE is me for that fearful day! For though we ought to rejoice when we hear these things, we feel pain and are dejected, and our countenance is sad. Or is it I only that feel thus, and do ye rejoice at hearing of these things? For upon me at least there comes a kind of shudder when these things are said, and I lament bitterly and groan from the very depth of my heart. For I have no part in these things, but in those that are spoken afterwards, that are said unto the virgins, unto him that buried the talents he had received, unto the wicked servant. For this cause I weep, to think from what glory we are to be cast out, from what hope of blessings, and this perpetually, and for ever, to spare ourselves a little labour. For if indeed this were a great toil, and a grievous law, we ought *even so* to do all things; nevertheless many of the remiss would seem to have at least some pretext, a poor pretext indeed, yet would they seem to have some, that the toil was great, and the time endless, and the burden intolerable; but now we can put forward no such objection; which circumstance most of all will gnaw us

no less than hell at that time, when for want of a slight endeavour, and a little toil, we shall have lost Heaven, and the unspeakable blessings. For both the time is short, and the labour small, and yet we faint and are supine. Thou strivest on earth, and the crown is in Heaven ; thou art punished of men, and art honoured of God ; the race is for two days, and the reward for endless ages ; the struggle is in a corruptible body, and the rewards in an incorruptible.

And apart from these things, we should consider another point also, that even if we do not choose to suffer any of the things that are painful for Christ's sake, we must in other ways most assuredly endure them. For neither, though thou shouldst not have died for Christ, wilt thou be immortal ; neither though thou shouldst not have cast away thy riches for Christ, wilt thou go away hence with them. These things He requires of thee, which although He should not require them, thou wilt have to give up, because thou art mortal ; He willeth thee to do these by thy choice which thou must do by necessity. So much only He requires to be added, that it be done for His sake ; since that these things befall men and pass away, cometh to pass of natural necessity. Seest thou how easy the conflict ? What it is altogether necessary for thee to suffer, that choose to suffer for My sake ; let this only be added, and I have sufficient obedience. The gold which thou intendest to lend to another, this lend to Me, both at

more profit, and in greater security. Thy body, wherewith thou art going to warfare for another, make it to war for Me, for indeed I surpass thy toils with recompenses in the most abundant excess. Yet thou in all other matters preferrest him that giveth thee more as well in loans, as in marketing and in warfare ; but Christ alone, when giving more, and infinitely more than all, thou dost not receive. And what is this so great hostility ? What is this so great enmity ? Where will there be any excuse or defence left for thee, when the reasons for which thou preferrest man to man avail not to induce thee to prefer God to man ?

Why dost thou commit thy treasure to the earth ? "Give it into My hand," He saith. Doth not the earth's Lord seem to thee more worthy of trust than the earth ? This indeed restoreth that which thou layest in it, though oftentimes not even this, but He gives thee also recompence for *His* keeping of it ! For indeed He doth exceedingly love us. Therefore if thou shouldest wish to lend, He stands ready ; or to sow, He receives it ; or if thou shouldest wish to build, He draws thee unto Himself, saying, Build in My regions. Why runnest thou unto poor, unto beggarly men, who also for little gains occasion thee great trouble ? Nevertheless not even on hearing these things, do we make up our minds to it, but where are fightings and wars, and wild struggles, and trials and suits of law, and false accusations, thither do we hasten.



Doth He not justly turn away from us, and punish us, when He is giving up Himself unto us for all things, and we are resisting Him? It is surely plain to all. For whether thou art desirous to adorn thyself, "Let it," He saith, "be with My Ornaments," or to arm thyself, "with My Arms," or to clothe thyself, "with My Raiment," or to feed thyself, "at My Table," or to journey "on My Way," or to inherit "My Inheritance," or to enter into a country, "the City of which I am Builder and Maker," or to build a house "amongst My Tabernacles." "For I, so far from asking thee for a recompence of the things that I give thee, do even make Myself owe thee a recompence for this very thing, if thou be willing to use all I have." What can be equal to this munificence, "I am Father, I am Brother, I am Bridegroom, I am Dwelling Place, I am Food, I am Raiment, I am Root, I am Foundation, all whatsoever thou willest, I am." "Be thou in need of nothing, I will be even a Servant, for I came to minister, not to be ministered unto; I am Friend, and Member, and Head, and Brother, and Sister, and Mother; I am all; only cling thou closely to Me. I was poor for thee, and a wanderer for thee, on the cross for thee, in the tomb for thee, above I intercede for thee to the Father, on earth I am come for thy sake, an Ambassador from My Father. Thou art all things to Me, brother and joint heir, and friend and member." What wouldest thou more? Why dost thou turn away from Him

Who loveth thee? Why dost thou labour for the world? Why dost thou draw water into a broken cistern? For this it is, to labour for the present life. Why dost thou comb wool into the fire? Why dost thou "beat the air?" Why dost thou "run in vain?" Hath not every art an end? It is surely plain to every one. Do thou also shew the end of thy worldly eagerness. But thou canst not, for "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." Let us go to the tombs: shew me thy father, shew me thy wife. Where is he that was clad in raiment of gold? he that rode in the chariot? he that had armies, that had the girdle, that had the heralds? he that was slaying these, and casting those into prison? he that put to death whom he would, and set free whom he was minded? I see nothing but bones, and a worm, and a spider's web; all those things are earth, all those a fable, all a dream, and a shadow, and a bare relation, and a picture, or rather not so much as a picture. For the picture we see at least is a likeness, but here not so much as a likeness.

And would that the evils stop with this. For now the honour, and the luxury, and the distinction, end with a shadow, with words; but the consequences of them are no longer limited to a shadow and to words, but continue, and will pass over with us elsewhere, and will be manifest to all, the rapine, the covetousness, the fornications, the adulteries, the dreadful things beyond number; these not in similitude, neither in ashes, but written above, both

words and deeds. With what eyes then shall we behold Christ? For if any one could not bear to see his father, when conscious to himself that he has sinned against him, upon Him Who infinitely exceeds a father in forbearance, how shall we then look? how shall we bear it? For indeed we shall stand at Christ's judgment-seat, and there will be a strict enquiry into all things. But if any man disbelieve the judgments to come, let him look at the things here, at those in the prisons, those in the mines, those on the dunghills, the possessed, the frantic, them that are struggling with incurable diseases, those that are fighting against continual poverty, them that live in famine, them that are pierced with irremediable woes, those in captivity. For those persons would not suffer these things here, unless vengeance and punishment were to await all the others also that have committed such sins. And if the rest have undergone nothing here, you ought to regard this very fact as a sign that there is surely something to follow after our departure here. For the self-same God of all would not take vengeance on some, and leave others unpunished, who have committed the same or more grievous offences, unless He designed to bring some punishment upon them there.

By these arguments then and these examples let us also humble ourselves; and let them who are obstinate unbelievers of the judgment, believe it henceforth, and become better men; that having lived

here in a manner worthy of the kingdom, we may attain unto the good things to come, by the grace and love towards man of our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

S. Chrysostom, on S. Matthew, Hom. lxxvi.

## **First Tuesday.**

### **FEARFULNESS OF GOD'S JUDGMENT. S. CHRYSOSTOM.**

Now let each man enter into his own conscience, and reckoning up his transgressions, let him call himself to a strict account, that he be not condemned with the world. For fearful is that court, awful the tribunal, full of trembling the accounts, a river of fire rolls along. "A brother doth not redeem, shall man redeem?" Call then to mind what is said in the Gospel, of the Angels running to and fro, of the bride-chamber being opened, of the lamps which are extinguished, of the powers which drag to the flames. And consider this, that if a secret deed of any one of us were brought forth in the midst, to-day, before the Church only, what prayer to perish, and to have the earth gape for him, would he not offer, rather than have so many witnesses of his wickedness? How then shall we feel when, before the whole

world, all things are brought into the midst, in such a theatre so bright and open, with both those known and those unknown to us seeing into every thing ? But alas ! wherewith am I forced to affright you ! with men's estimation ! when I ought to use the fear of God, and your self-condemnation. For what, pray, is to become of us then, when bound, and gnashing our teeth, we are led away to the outer darkness ? Or rather, what shall we do (and this is the most fearful thought of all) when we offend God ? For if any one have sense and reason, he has already endured a hell when he is out of sight of God. But since this doth not pain, he therefore threatened fire. For we ought to smart not when we are punished, but when we sin. Thus listen to Paul wailing and lamenting over sins, for which he was not to be punished. For "I am not meet," he says, "to be called an Apostle, because I persecuted the Church." Hear also David, when he is set free from the punishment, yet as thinking that he had offended God, calling vengeance down upon himself, and saying, "Let Thy hand be upon me, and upon my father's house." For to have offended God is more distressing than to be punished. But now we are so wretchedly disposed, that, were there no fear of hell, we should not even choose readily to do any good thing. Wherefore were it for nothing else, yet for this at least, we should deserve hell, because we fear hell more than Christ. But not so the blessed Paul, but contrariwise. But since we

feel otherwise, for this reason are we condemned to hell ; since did we but love Christ as we should love Him, we should have known that to offend Him we love were more painful than hell. But since we love Him not, we know not the greatness of His punishment. And that is what I bewail and grieve over the most. And yet what has God not done, to be beloved of us ? What hath He not devised ? What hath He omitted ? We insulted Him, when He had not wronged us in aught, but had even benefitted us with blessings countless and unspeakable. We have turned aside from Him when calling and drawing us to Him by all ways, yet hath He not even upon this punished us, but hath run Himself unto us, and held us back, when fleeing, and we have shaken Him off and leaped away to the Devil. And not even on this hath He stood aloof, but hath sent numberless messengers to call us to Him again, Prophets, Angels, Patriarchs : and we have not only not received the embassy, but have even insulted those that came. But not even for this did He spew us out of His mouth, but like those slighted lovers that be very earnest, He went round beseeching all, the heaven, the earth, Jeremiah, Michaiah, and that not that He might weigh us down, but that He might speak in behalf of His own ways ; and along with the Prophets He went also Himself to those that turned aside from Him, being ready to submit to examination, and deigning to condescend to a conference, and drawing them that were deaf to

every appeal, into a disputation with Himself. For He saith, "O my people, what have I done unto thee, and wherein have I wearied thee? Answer me." After all this, we killed the Prophets, we stoned them, we did them other cruel wrongs without number. What then? In their place He sent no longer Prophets, no longer Angels, no longer Patriarchs, but the Son Himself. The Son too was killed when He had come, and yet not even then did He quench His love, but kindled it even more, and keepeth on beseeching us, and doing all things to turn us unto Himself. And Paul crieth aloud, saying, "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: be ye reconciled to God." None of these things however reconciled us. Yet not even then did He leave us, but keeps on both threatening hell and promising the Kingdom, that so at least He may get us drawn unto Him. But we be still in an insensible mood. What could be worse than this brutishness? For had a man done these things, should not we many times over have let ourselves become slaves to him? But God, when doing so, we turn us away from! O what listlessness! O what unfeelingness! We that live continually in sin and wickedness, if we happen to do any little good, like unfeeling domestics, with what a niggardly spirit do we exact it, and how particular are we about the recompense made, if what we have done has any recompense to come of it. And yet the recompense is the greater if you do it

without any hope of reward. Why saying all this, and making exact reckoning, is language fitter for an hireling than domestic of willing mind. For we ought to do every thing for Christ's sake, not for the reward, but for Him. For this also was why He threatened hell and promised the Kingdom, that He might be loved of us. Let us then so love Him as we ought to love Him. In this is the great reward, this is royalty and pleasure, this is enjoyment, and glory, and honour, this is light, this is the great happiness, which language cannot set before us, nor mind conceive. Yet indeed I do not know how I was led so far in this way of speaking, and came to be exhorting men who do not even think slightly of power and glory here for Christ's sake, to think slightly of the kingdom. Yet still those great and noble men, even attained to this measure of love. Hear, for instance, how Peter burns with love towards Him, setting Him before his soul, and his life, and all things. And when he had denied Him, it was not the punishment he was grieved for, but that he had denied Him Whom he longed for, which was more bitter to him than any punishment. And all this did he shew before the grace of the Spirit was given. And he perseveringly pressed the question, "Whither goest Thou?" and before this: "To whom shall we go?" and again, "I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest." Thus was He all things to them, and neither heaven nor the kingdom of heaven did they count of, in comparison of Him they



longed for. For Thou art all these things unto me, he means. And why dost thou marvel that Peter was so minded? Hear now what the Prophet says: "What have I in heaven, and what is there upon earth, that I should desire in comparison of Thee?" Now what he means is nearly this. Neither of things above nor of things below desire I any, save Thee only. This is desire; this is love. Can we so love, it will not be things present only, but even things to come, which we shall reckon as nothing compared with that charm, and even here shall we enjoy the kingdom, delighting ourselves in the love of Him. And how is this to be? one may say. If we will reflect how oft we insult Him, after His numberless goodnesses, yet He standeth and calleth us to Him, and so often as we run by Him, He still doth not overlook us, but runneth to us, and draweth us to Him, and catcheth us in unto Himself. For if we consider these things and such as these, we shall be enabled to kindle this longing. For if it were a common man that so loved, but a king who was thus beloved, would he not feel a respect for the greatness of the love? Most assuredly he would. But when the case is reversed, and His beauty is unspeakable, and the glory and the riches too of Him that loveth us, and our vileness so great, surely we deserve the utmost punishment, vile as we are and outcasts, who are treated with so exceeding great love by One so great and wonderful, and yet wax wanton against His love? He needeth not any thing

of ours, and yet He doth not even now cease loving us. We need much what is His, and for all that, we cleave not unto His love, but money we value above Him, and man's friendship, and ease of body, and power, and fame, before Him who valueth nothing more than us. For He had One Son, Very and Only-begotten, and He spared not even Him for us. But we value many things above Him. Were there then not good reason for a hell, were it twofold, or threefold, or manifold what it is? For what can we have to say for ourselves, if even Satan's injunctions we value more than the Laws of Christ, and are reckless of our own salvation, that we may choose the works of wickedness, before Him, Who suffered all things for us? And what pardon do these things deserve? what excuse have they? Not one even. Let us then stand henceforward, not rushing headlong down precipices, and let us grow again sober; and reckoning up all these things, let us send up glory unto Him by our works, (for words alone suffice not thereto,) that we too may enjoy the glory that cometh of Him, which may we all attain unto by the grace and love toward man, of our Lord Jesus Christ, through Whom, and with Whom, to the Father be glory, with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.

S. Chrysostom. Epistle to the Romans, Hom. v.

## First Wednesday.

### ETERNAL PUNISHMENT FOR THE UNBELIEVING. S. CYPRIAN.

LET no one therefore comfort himself with the pretence, because there is to us and to the profane, to God's worshippers and God's enemies, through equality of the flesh and of the body, a common liability to the troubles of life for a season, that therefore he is not to consider all these things which take place to be drawn down by you, since by God's own preaching and prophetic attestations it hath before been said, that on the unjust should come the wrath of God, and persecutions would not be wanting which humanly should hurt us, but that avengements should ensue bearing a divine defence to the injured. How great too are those things, which meantime are being done in our behalf! A portion by way of example is given us, that we may learn what is the anger of an avenging God. But the day of judgment is yet beyond, which Holy Scripture thus foretels and denounces; "Howl ye, for the day of the Lord is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from God. For, behold, the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and anger, to lay the earth desolate, and to destroy the sinners out of it."

And again, "Behold the day of the Lord cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the aliens, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble, and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord." The Lord prophesies that the aliens shall be burnt and consumed, aliens, that is, from the divine family and unhallowed, not born again of the Spirit, not made the sons of God. For that those only can escape, who are born again and signed with the Sign of Christ, God sets forth in another place, when, sending His Angels for the devastation of the world, and the death of the human race, He speaks a heavier warning in the last time: "Go ye and smite, let not your eye spare; have no pity on old or young, slay maids, and children, and women, that they be utterly destroyed. But touch not any man upon whom is the Mark." What is this Mark, and in what part of the body placed, God manifests in another place, thus speaking; "Go through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry, for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof." And that this Sign pertains to the Passion and Blood of Christ, and he is kept safe and secure who is found with this Sign, is likewise ensured by the testimony of God, thus saying; "And the blood shall be to you for a token in the houses where ye are, and when I see the blood, I will protect you, and the plague shall not be upon you, when I smite the land of Egypt." That which went before in image by the slaying of

the lamb, is fulfilled in Christ by the truth following afterwards. As there in the smiting of Egypt, the Jewish people could not escape, save by the sign and blood of the lamb ; so likewise when the world begins to be wasted and smitten, he only shall escape, who is found in the Blood and in the Sign of Christ.

Grow wise now therefore, while there is time, unto the true and eternal salvation ; and since the end of the world is close at hand, in fear of God turn unto God your minds. Make not yourselves happy in the impotent and vain dominion, which you exercise in this world over the just and meek ; it is as the dominion of darnel and reeds in a field, over the cultured and fertile grain. Neither say ye, that evil things happen, because your gods are not worshipped by us ; but learn that this anger of God is a visitation from Him, to the end that He Who is not seen in His bounties, may be felt in His plagues. Seek God, though it be late, for long since by the Prophet doth God, fore-advising us, exhort and say, "Seek the Lord, and ye shall live." Know the Lord, though it be late to come to knowledge of Him ; since Christ, when He came, spoke this instruction and lesson ; "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent." Believe in Him, Who never deceives. Believe in Him, Who foretold that all these things should be ; believe in Him, Who to them who believe will give the reward of life eternal ; believe in Him, Who on them that be-

lieve not, will bring down eternal punishments in the fires of Hell. What glory will faith then have, and what penalty will faithlessness, when the day of judgment comes ! What joy for the believers, what sorrow for the faithless ; to have refused to believe here, and now to be unable to return, in order that they may believe ! Hell ever burning will consume the accursed, and a devouring punishment of lively flames ; nor will there be that from whence their torments can ever receive either repose or end. Souls with their bodies will be saved unto suffering, in tortures infinite. There that man will be seen by us for ever, who made us his spectacle here for a season ; what brief enjoyment those cruel eyes received from the persecutions wrought upon us, will be balanced against a spectacle eternal ; according to the truth of Holy Scripture, thus speaking ; " Their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched ; and they shall be for a vision to all flesh." And again ; " Then shall the righteous men stand in great boldness before the face of such as have afflicted them, and have taken away their labours. When they see it, they shall be troubled with terrible fear, and shall be amazed at the strangeness of his salvation, beyond all that they looked for ; and they, repenting and groaning for anguish of spirit, shall say within themselves, These are they whom we had sometimes in derision and a proverb of reproach ; we fools accounted their life madness, and their end to be without honour ; now are they

numbered among the children of God, and their lot is among the saints ! Therefore have we erred from the way of truth, and the light of righteousness hath not shined upon us, and the sun rose not on us. We wearied ourselves in the way of wickedness and destruction ; we have gone through deserts where there lay no way ; but as for the way of the Lord, we have not known it. What hath pride profited us ? or what good hath riches with our vaunting brought us ? All these things are passed away like a shadow." Then will there be pain of punishment, without the profitableness of penitence, lamentation will be vain, and entreaty ineffectual. Too late will they believe in an eternal punishment, who refused to believe in the life eternal. Wherefore, while it may be done, give heed to safety and life.

We offer you the saving aid of our mind and counsel ; and since we may not hate, but we please God the more, by rendering no return for injury, we exhort you while means there are, while time yet yields its remnant, to make your peace with God, and emerge into the bright light of true religion, from the deep and murky night of superstition. We have no grudge against your welfare, nor do we make any concealment of the bounties divine ; we render good-will for your hatred, and point out paths of salvation, in return for the torments and the sufferings which have been inflicted on us. Believe, and live ; you have been our persecutors in time ; in eternity, be companions of our joy. Once

gone forth from hence, there is no more place for repentance ; no satisfaction can be accomplished ; it is here that life is either lost or saved ; it is here that eternal salvation is provided for, by the worship of God, and the fruit of faith. Let a man be withheld neither by his sins nor by his years, from coming to make good his salvation ; while he remains in this world, no repentance is too late ; the approach to God's indulgence is open, and an easy access is given to those who enquire for and admit the truth. You, if you should entreat for your offences, even in the very exit and close of your life below, if you should implore that God Who is One and True, in the confession and faith of acknowledging Him, the pardon is given to you when you confess ; the saving indulgence from God's pity is granted to you when you believe ; nay in the very hour of death a transit is secured to immortality. This grace Christ grants, this work of His mercy He puts in our possession, by subduing death in the trophy of the Cross, by redeeming the believer with the price of His Blood, by reconciling man to God the Father, and giving life to one who is mortal by heavenly regeneration. Him, if it be possible, let us all follow ; let us be enlisted under His Sacrament and Sign ; He opens to us the path of life, He brings us back to Paradise, He will guide us into the kingdom of Heaven. With Him we shall ever live, made by Him the sons of God ; with Him we shall for ever rejoice, the creatures of His Blood-shedding. We Christians



will be partakers in glory with Christ, in the blessedness of God the Father, rejoicing with perpetual gladness, in the presence of God for ever, and for ever yielding Him thanks. For he cannot be other than for ever happy and thankful, who, after living under liability to death, is rendered secure of immortality.

S. Cyprian, to Demetrianus, viii. 12.

### **First Thursday.**

#### **LOSS OF HEAVEN WORSE THAN HELL. S. CHRYSOSTOM.**

I know indeed that many tremble only at Hell, but I affirm the loss of the glory of Heaven, to be a far greater punishment than Hell. And if it be not possible to exhibit it such in words, this is nothing marvellous. For neither do we know the blessedness of those good things, that we should on the other hand clearly perceive the wretchedness ensuing on being deprived of them ; since Paul, as knowing these things clearly, is aware, that to fall from Christ's glory is more grievous than all. And this we shall know at this time, when we shall fall into the actual trial of it.

But may this never be our case, O Thou Only-begotten Son of God, neither may we ever have any experience of this irremediable punishment. For how great an evil it is to fall from those good things, cannot indeed be accurately told ; nevertheless, as I may be able, I will labour and strive by an example to make it clear to you, though it be but in some small degree.

Let us then imagine a wondrous Child, having besides His virtue the dominion of the whole world, and in all respects so virtuous, as to be capable of bringing all men to the yearning of a father's affection. What then do you think the father of this Child would not gladly suffer, not to be cast out of His society ? And what evil, small or great, would he not welcome, on condition of seeing and enjoying Him ? Now let us reason just so with respect to that glory also. For no child, be he never so virtuous, is so desirable and lovely to a father, as the having our portion in those good things, and "to depart and be with Christ." No doubt Hell, and that punishment, is a thing not to be borne. Yet though one suppose ten thousand hells, he will utter nothing like what it will be to fail of that blessed glory, to be hated of Christ, to hear "I know you not," to be accused for not feeding Him when we saw Him an hungred. Yea, better surely to endure a thousand thunderbolts, than to see that Face of Mildness turning away from us, and that Eye of Peace not enduring to look upon us. For if He,

while I was an enemy, and hating Him, and turning from Him, did in such wise follow after me, as not to spare even Himself, but to give Himself up unto death; when after all this, I do not vouchsafe to Him so much as a loaf in His hunger, with what kind of eyes shall I ever again behold Him?

But mark even here His gentleness; in that He doth not at all speak of His benefits, nor say, "Thou hast despised Him that hath done thee so much good;" neither doth He say, "Me, Who brought thee from that which is not into being, Who breathed into thee a soul, and set thee over all things on earth, Who for thy sake made earth, and heaven, and sea, and air, and all things that are, Who had been dishonoured by thee, yea, accounted of less honour than the devil, and did not even so withdraw Himself, but had innumerable thoughts for thee after it all: Who chose to become a slave, Who was beaten with rods and spit upon, Who was slain, Who died the most shameful death, Who also on high makes intercession for thee, Who freely gives thee His Spirit, Who vouchsafes to thee a kingdom, Who makes thee such promises, Whose will it is to be unto thee Head, and Bridegroom, and Garment, and House, and Root, and Meat, and Drink, and Shepherd, and King, and Who hath taken thee to be brother, and heir, and joint-heir with Himself; Who hath brought thee out of darkness into the dominion of light." These things, I say, and more than these He might speak of, but

He mentions none of these ; but what ? Only the sin itself.

Even here He shews His love, and indicates the yearning which He hath toward thee ; not saying, "Depart into the fire" prepared for you, but "prepared for the devil." And before, He tells them what wrongs they had done, and neither so doth He endure to mention all, but a few. And before these, He calls the other sort, those who have done well, to signify from this too that He is blaming them justly.

What amount of punishment, then, is so grievous as these words ? For if any one seeing but a man who was his benefactor an hungered, would not neglect him ; or if he should neglect him, being upbraided with it, would choose rather to sink into the earth than to hear of it in the presence of two or three friends ; what will be our feelings, on hearing these words in the presence of the whole world ; such as He would not say even then, were He not earnestly accounting for His own doings ? For that not to upbraid did He bring these things forward, but in self-defence, and for the sake of shewing, that not without ground nor at random was He saying, "depart from me ;" this is evident from His unspeakable benefits. For if He had been minded to upbraid, He would have brought forward all these, but now He mentions only what treatment He hath received.

Let us therefore, beloved, fear the hearing these

words. Life is not a plaything : or rather our present life is a plaything, but the things to come are not such, or perchance our life is not a plaything only, but even worse than this. For it ends not in laughter, but rather brings exceeding damage on them who are not minded to order their own ways strictly. For what, I pray thee, is the difference between children who are playing at building houses, and us when we are building our fine houses ? What again between them making out their dinners, and us in our delicate fare ? None, but just that we do it at the risk of being punished. And if we do not yet quite perceive the poverty of what is going on, no wonder, for we are not yet become men ; but when we are become so, we shall know that all these things are childish.

For so those other things too, as we grow to manhood, we laugh to scorn ; but when we are children, we account them to be worth anxiety ; and while we are gathering together potsherds and mire, we think no less of ourselves than they who are erecting their great circuits of walls. Nevertheless they straightway perish and fall down, and not even when standing can they be of any use to us, as indeed neither can those fine houses. For the citizen of Heaven they cannot receive, neither can he bear to abide in them, who hath his country above, but as we throw down these with our feet, so he too those by his high spirit. And as we laugh at the children, weeping at that overthrow, even so these also, when

we are bewailing it all, do not laugh only, but weep also, because both their bowels are compassionate, and great is the mischief thence arising.

Let us therefore become men. How long are we to crawl on the earth, priding ourselves on stones and stocks? How long are we to play? And would we played only! But now we even betray our own salvation; and as children when they neglect their learning, and practise themselves in these things at their leisure, suffer very severe blows; even so we too, spending all our diligence herein, and having then our spiritual lessons required of us in our works, and not being able to produce them, shall have to pay the utmost penalty. And there is none to deliver us; though he be father, brother, what you will. But while these things shall all pass away, the torment ensuing upon them remains immortal and unceasing; which sort of thing indeed takes place with respect to the children as well, their father destroying their childish toys altogether for their idleness, and causing them to weep incessantly.

And to convince thee that these things are such, let us bring before us wealth, that which more than any thing seems to be worthy of our pains, and let us set against it a virtue of the soul, (which soever thou wilt,) and then shalt thou see most clearly the vileness thereof. Let us, I say, suppose there are two men, (and I do not now speak of injuriousness, but as yet of honest wealth;) and of these two, let the

one get together money, and sail on the sea, and till the land, and find many other ways of merchandise ; (although I know not quite, whether, so doing, he can make honest gains ; ) nevertheless let it be so, and let it be granted that his gains are gotten with honesty ; that he buys fields, and slaves, and all such things, and suppose no injustice connected therewith. But let the other one, possessing as much, sell fields, sell houses, and vessels of gold and silver, and give it to the poor ; let him supply the necessitous, heal the sick, free such as are in straits, some let him deliver from bonds, others let him release that are in mines, these let him bring back from the noose, those, who are captives, let him rescue from their punishment. Of whose side then would you be ? And we have not as yet spoken of the future, but as yet of what is here. Of whose part then would ye be ? his that is gathering gold, or his that is doing away with calamities ? with him that is purchasing fields, or him who is making himself a harbour of refuge for the human race ? him that is clothed with much gold, or him that is crowned with innumerable blessings ? Is not the one like some angel come down from Heaven for the amendment of the rest of mankind ; but the other not so much as like a man, but like some little child that is gathering all together vainly and at random ?

But if to get money honestly be thus absurd, and of extreme madness ; when not even the honesty is there, how can such a man choose but be more

wretched than any? I say, if the absurdity be so great; when Hell is added thereto, and the loss of the Right Arm, how great wailings are due to him both living and dead? .

Or wilt thou that we take in hand some other part also of virtue? Let us then introduce again another man, who is in power, commanding all, invested with great dignity, having a gorgeous herald, and girdle, and lictors, and a large company of attendants. Doth not this seem great, and meet to be called happy? Well then, against this man again let us set another, him that is patient of injuries, and meek, and lowly, and long-suffering; and let this last be despitefully used, be beaten, and let him bear it quietly and bless them that are doing such things. Now which is the one to be admired, I pray thee? he that is puffed up, and inflamed, or he that is self-subdued? Is not the one again like the Powers above, that are so free from passion, but the other like a blown bladder, or a man who hath the dropsy, and a great inflammation? The one like a spiritual physician, the other, a ridiculous child that is puffing out his cheeks?

For why dost thou pride thyself, O man? Because thou art borne on high in a chariot? Because a yoke of mules is drawing thee? And what is this? Why, this, one may see befalling mere logs of wood and stones. Is it that thou art clothed with beautiful garments? But look at him that is clad with virtue for garments, and thou wilt see thyself to be like



withering hay, but him like a tree that bears marvellous fruit, and affords much delight to the beholders. For thou art bearing about food for worms and moths, who, if they should set upon thee, will quickly strip thee bare of this adorning, (for truly garments and gold and silver, are, the one, the spinning of worms, the other, earth and dust, and again become earth and nothing more :) but he that is clothed with virtue hath such raiment, as not only worms cannot hurt, but not even Death itself. And very naturally ; for these virtues of the soul have not their origin from the earth, but are a fruit of the Spirit ; wherefore neither are they subject to the mouths of worms. Nay, for these garments are woven in Heaven, where is neither moth, nor worm, nor any other such thing.

Which then is better, tell me ? To be rich, or to be poor ? To be in power, or in dishonour ? In luxury, or in hunger ? It is quite clear ; to be in honour, and enjoyment, and wealth. Therefore, if thou wouldest have the things and not the names, leave the earth and what is here, and find thee a place to anchor in Heaven : for what is here is a shadow, but all things there are immovable, stedfast, and beyond any assault.

Let us therefore choose them with all diligent care, that we may be delivered from the turmoil of the things here, and having sailed into that calm harbour, may be found with our lading abundant, and with that unspeakable wealth of almsgiving ;

unto which God grant we may all attain, by the grace and love towards man of our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom be the glory and the might, world without end. Amen.

S. Chrysostom, on S. Matthew, Hom. xxiii.

## First Friday.

### FEAR OF DEATH. S. CHRYSOSTOM.

BUT give me, saith one to be like Paul, and I shall never be afraid of death !

Why, what is it that forbids thee, O man to become like Paul ? Was he not a poor man ? Was he not a tent maker ? Was he not a man of mean rank ? For if he had been rich and well born, the poor, when called upon to imitate his zeal, would have had their poverty to plead ; but now thou canst say nothing of this sort. For this man was one who exercised a manual art, and supported himself too by his daily labours. And thou indeed from the first hast inherited true religion from thy fathers ; and from thy earliest age hast been nourished in the study of the sacred writings ; but he was a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious, and ravaged the Church ! Nevertheless he so changed all at once, as to surpass all in the vehemence of his zeal, and he cries out saying : “ Be ye followers of me even

also as I am of Christ." He imitated the Lord ; and wilt not thou who hast been educated in piety from the first, imitate a fellow-servant ; one who by a great change was brought to the faith at a later period of life ? Knowest thou not, that they who are in sins are dead whilst they live ; and that they who live in righteousness, although they be dead, yet they live ? And this is not my word. It is the declaration of Christ speaking to Martha, " He that believeth in Me though he were dead yet shall he live." Is our doctrine, indeed, a fable ? If thou art a Christian, believe in Christ : if thou believest in Christ, shew me thy faith by thy works. But how mayest thou shew this ? By thy contempt of death : for in this we differ from the unbelievers. They may well fear death ; since they have no hope of a resurrection. But thou who art travelling toward better things, and hast the opportunity of meditating on the hope of the future ; what excuse hast thou, if whilst assured of a resurrection, thou art yet at the same time as fearful of death, as those who believe not the resurrection ?

But I have no fear of death, says one, nor of the act of dying, but of dying basely, of being beheaded. Did John then, I ask, die basely ? for he was beheaded. Or did Stephen die basely ? for he was stoned ; and all the martyrs have thus died miserably, according to this objection : since some have ended their lives by fire ; and others by the sword ; and some cast into the ocean ; others down a preci-

pice; and others into the jaws of wild beasts, have so come by their death.

This, O man! is not to die basely, to come to one's end by a violent death, but to die in sin! Hear at least the Prophet uttering wisdom on this very matter, and saying, "Evil is the death of sinners." He does not say that a violent death is evil; but what then? "Evil is the death of sinners." And justly so; for after the departure from this life, there is an intolerable punishment; torments that are immortal, the envenomed worm; the fire unquenchable, the outer darkness, the chains indissoluble; the gnashing of teeth, the tribulation, and the anguish, and the eternal vengeance.

Since therefore such evils await sinners what advantage can it be to them, though they should end their days at home, and in their bed? Even so on the other hand, it can do no harm to the righteous to lay down the present life, through sword, or steel, or fire, when they are to depart to the good things that are immortal.

Truly "the death of sinners is evil." Such a death was that of the rich man, who despised Lazarus. He, when he had terminated his life by a natural end, at home and on his bed, with his relatives about him, experienced on his departure, a fiery torment; nor was he able to obtain there even a little comfort out of all the pleasure he had enjoyed in the present life! But not so was it with Lazarus; for when lying upon the pavement, while the dogs

came and licked his sores, he had suffered a violent death, (for what could be more painful than hunger?) but on his departing hence he enjoyed eternal blessings, luxuriating on the bosom of Abraham! In what respect, then, did it injure him that he died a violent death? Or what did it profit the rich man, that he died not with violence?

But says some one, "We have no fear of the violence of the death, but of dying unjustly; and of being punished in a similar way with the guilty,—we who have had nothing to do with the crimes of which we are suspected." What sayest thou, tell me? Art thou afraid of dying unjustly? and wouldst thou wish to die justly? But who is there so wretched and miserable that when he had the alternative of dying unjustly, would rather depart by an act of justice? For if it be necessary to fear death, it is necessary to fear it when it comes upon us justly; since he indeed who dies unjustly, is by this very means made a partaker with all the saints. For many of those who were approved, and distinguished by God, have submitted to an unjust end; and first of all Abel. For it was not that he had sinned against his brother, or done Cain any harm; but inasmuch as he had honoured God, therefore was he slaughtered. But God permitted it. Was it, think you, because He loved him, or because He hated him? Most clearly because He loved him, and wished to make his crown the brighter by that most unjust murder. Seest thou then that it be-

comes us not to be afraid of dying by violence ; not of dying unjustly, but of dying in a state of sin ? Abel died unjustly, Cain lived, groaning and trembling ! Which then, I would, ask was the more blessed of the two : he who went to rest in righteousness, or he who lived in sin ? he who died unjustly, or he who was justly punished ? Would you have me declare unto your charity whence it is that we are afraid of death ? The love of the Kingdom hath not penetrated us, nor the desire of things to come inflamed us ; otherwise we should despise all present things, even as the blessed Paul did. Add to this, on the other hand, that we do not stand in awe of hell ; therefore death is terrible. We are not sensible of the unsufferable nature of the punishment there ; therefore instead of sin, we fear death ; since if the fear of the one held possession of our souls, the fear of the other would not be able to enter.

S. Chrysostom on the Statues, Hom. v.

## *First Saturday.*

### THREE KINDS OF SINNERS.

S. AUGUSTINE.

LET us then see what He would have us learn in those three dead persons whom He raised. He raised again the dead daughter of the ruler of the

synagogue, for whom when she was sick, petition was made to Him, that He would deliver her from her sickness. And as He is going, it is announced that she is dead ; and as though He would now be only wearying Himself in vain, word was brought to her father, "Thy daughter is dead, why wearyest thou the Master any further?" But He went in and said to the father of the damsel, "be not afraid, only believe." He comes to the house and finds the customary funeral obsequies already prepared, and He says to them, "Weep not, for the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth." He spake the truth ; she was asleep ; asleep, that is, in respect of Him, by Whom she could be awakened. So, awakening her, He restored her alive to her parents.

So again He awakened that young man, the widow's son, by whose case I have been now reminded to speak with you, beloved, on this subject, as He Himself shall vouchsafe to give me power. Ye have just heard how he was awakened. The Lord "came nigh to the city ; and behold there was a dead man being carried out" already beyond the gate. Moved with compassion, for that the mother, a widow and bereaved of her only son, was weeping, He did what ye have heard, saying, "Young man, I say unto thee, arise. He that was dead arose, and began to speak, and He restored him to his mother."

He awakened Lazarus likewise from the tomb. And in that case when the disciples with whom He was speaking, knew that he was sick, He said, (now "Jesus

loved him,") "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth." They, thinking of the sick man's healthful sleep; say, "Lord, if he sleep he is well. Then said Jesus," speaking now more plainly, I tell you "our friend Lazarus is dead." And in both He said the truth; "He is dead in respect of you, he is asleep in respect of Me."

These three kinds of dead persons, are three kinds of sinners whom even at this day Christ doth raise. For that dead daughter of the ruler of the synagogue was within in the house, she had not yet been carried out from the secrecy of its walls into public view. There within was she raised, and restored alive to her parents. But the second was not now indeed in the house, but still not yet in the tomb, he had been carried out of the walls, but not committed to the ground. He who raised the dead maiden who was not yet carried out, raised this dead man who was now carried out, but not yet buried. There remained a third case, that He should raise one who was also buried; and this He did in Lazarus. There are then those who have sin inwardly in the heart, but have it not yet in overt act. A man, for instance, is disturbed by any lust. For the Lord Himself saith, "Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." He has not yet in body approached her, but in heart he has consented; he has one dead within, he has not yet carried him out. And as it often happens, as we know, as men daily experience in themselves, when they hear the Word of God, as



it were the Lord saying, "Arise;" the consent unto sin is condemned, they breathe again unto saving health and righteousness. The dead man in the house arises, the heart revives in the secret of the thoughts. This resurrection of a dead soul takes place within, in the retirement of the conscience, as it were within the walls of the house. Others after consent proceed to overt act; carrying out the dead, as it were, that that which was concealed in secret, may appear in public. Are these now, who have advanced to the outward act, past hope? Was it not said to the young man in the Gospel also "I say unto thee, Arise?" Was he not also restored to his mother? So then he too who has committed the open act, if haply admonished and aroused by the word of truth, he rise again at the Voice of Christ, is restored alive. Go so far he could; perish for ever he could not. But they who by doing what is evil, involve themselves even in evil habit, so that this very habit of evil suffers them not to see that it is evil, become defenders of their evil deeds; are angry when they are found fault with, to such a degree, that the men of Sodom of old said to the righteous man who reproved their abominable design, "Thou art come to sojourn, not to give laws." So powerful in that place was the habit of abominable filthiness, that profligacy now passed for righteousness, and the hinderer of it was found fault with rather than the doer. Such as these, pressed down by a malignant habit, are, as it were, buried. Yea,

what shall I say, brethren ? In such sort buried, as was said of Lazarus, "By this time he stinketh." That heap placed upon the grave, is this stubborn force of habit, whereby the soul is pressed down, and is not suffered either to rise, or breathe again.

Now it was said, "He hath been dead four days." So in truth the soul arrives at that habit, of which I am speaking, by a kind of fourfold progress. For there is first the provocation as it were of pleasure in the heart, secondly, consent ; thirdly, the overt act, fourthly, the habit. For there are those who so entirely throw off things unlawful from their thoughts, as not even to feel any pleasure in them. There are those who do feel the pleasure, and do not consent to them ; death is not yet perfected ; but in a certain sort begun. To the feeling of pleasure is added consent ; now at once is that condemnation incurred. After the consent, progress is made unto the open act ; the act changes into a habit ; and a sort of desperate condition is produced, so as that it may be said, "He hath been dead four days, by this time he stinketh." Therefore the Lord came, to Whom of course all things were easy ; yet He found in that case as it were a kind of difficulty. He "groaned" in the spirit ; He shewed that there is need of much and loud remonstrance to raise up those who have grown hard by habit. Yet at the voice of the Lord's cry, the bands of necessity were burst asunder. The powers of hell trembled, and Lazarus is restored alive. For the Lord delivers even from evil habits

those who have been dead four days ; for this man in the Gospel who had been dead four days, was asleep only in respect of Christ, Whose will it was to raise him again. But what said He ? Observe the manner of his arising again. He came forth from the tomb alive, but he could not walk. And the Lord said to the disciples ; " Loose him, and let him go." *He* raised him from death ; *they* loosed him from bonds. Observe how there is something which appertaineth to the special Majesty of God Who raiseth up. A man involved in an evil habit is rebuked by the word of truth. How many are rebuked, and give no ear !

Who is it then who deals within with him who does give ear ? Who breathes life into him within ? Who is it who drives away the unseen death, gives the life unseen ? After rebukes, after remonstrances, are not men left alone to their own thoughts, do they not begin to turn over in their minds how evil a life they are living, with how very bad a habit they are weighed down ? Then displeased with themselves, they determine to change their life. Such have risen again ; they to whom what they have been is displeasing, have revived : but though reviving, they are not able to walk. These are the bands of their guilt. Need then there is, that whoso has returned to life should be loosed, and let go. This office hath He given to the disciples, to whom He said, " Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven also."

Let us then, dearly beloved, in such wise hear

these things, that they who are alive may live ; they who are dead may live again. Whether it be that as yet the sin has been conceived in the heart, and not come forth into open act ; let the thought be repented of, and corrected, let the dead within the house of conscience arise. Or whether he has actually committed what he thought of ; let not even thus his case be despaired of. The dead within has not arisen, let him arise when he is carried out. Let him repent of his deed, let him at once return to life ; let him not go to the depth of the grave, let him not receive the load of habit upon him. But peradventure I am now speaking to one, who is already pressed down by this hard stone of his own habit, who is already laden with the weight of custom, who "has been in the grave four days already, and who stinketh." Yet let not even him despair ; he is dead, in the depth below ; but Christ is exalted on high. He knows how by His Cry to burst asunder the burdens of earth ; He knows how to restore life within by Himself, and to deliver him to the disciples to be loosed. Let even such as these repent. For when Lazarus had been raised again after the four days, no foul smell remained in him when he was alive. So then let them who are alive, still live ; and let those who are dead, whosoever they be, in which kind soever of these three deaths they find themselves, see to it that they rise again at once with all speed.

St. Augustine, on S. Luke, Serm. xlviii.

## **Second Sunday in Advent.**

### **REPENTANCE EVER ACCEPTED.**

**S. CYRIL OF JERUSALEM.**

WHAT then? some one will say. We have been seduced and are lost; is there no chance of salvation? We have fallen; cannot we rise? We have been blinded; cannot we recover our sight? We have been crippled; cannot our feet become straight again? In a word, we are dead; is there no resurrection? Shall not He, O man, who woke Lazarus, a corpse of four days which stank, shall not He much more easily raise up thee, a living man? He who shed His precious Blood for us, the same shall rescue us from sin. Let us not give sentence against ourselves, brethren; let us not abandon our case as hopeless; not to believe there is hope in penitence, is dreadful indeed. For he who is without expectation of salvation, spares not to increase the evil; but he who hopes for a cure, is easily induced to spare himself. Thus the robber who expects no mercy runs into recklessness; but if he hopes for pardon often betakes himself to repentance. Nay, does the serpent strip himself of old age, and shall not we cast the slough of wickedness? Does thorny ground by good tillage become fruitful, and is salvation to

us irrecoverable? Nature then admits of salvation; all that is wanting is the purpose of mind. God is loving to man, and that not a little. For say not, "I have committed whoredom and adultery; fearful things have been done by me, nor once only but often; will He forgive? will He forget?" Hear what the Psalmist says; "O how plentiful is Thy goodness, O Lord." Thy accumulated sins surpass not the multitude of the mercies of God; thy wounds baffle not the skill of the chief Physician. Only give thyself to Him in faith; tell the Physician thine ailment; say thou also as David did; "I said, I will confess my sins unto the Lord," and what He says next shall also be fulfilled in thee; "and so Thou forgavest the wickedness of my sin." Wouldest thou see the loving-kindness of God, O thou that art lately come to the Catechising? wouldest thou see the loving-kindness of God, and the abundance of His long-suffering? Hear then concerning Adam. Adam disobeyed, the first whom God created; might He not at once have visited him with death? But see what the Lord does, in His great Love towards man: though He casts Him out of Paradise, his sin making him unfit to continue there, yet He places him (opposite to Paradise) that seeing what he had forfeited, and what a downfall he had suffered, he thenceforth might be saved by repentance. Cain the first-born man became a fratricide, a deviser of evils, the cause of murders, and the first who envied; yet when he had slain his brother, to what is he

doomed? "a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth." How great the sin, how light the doom!

This then in very deed is loving-kindness in God, yet it is small, compared with what follows; for consider I pray the history of Noe. The giants sinned, and lawlessness was then lavishly poured out upon the earth; and in consequence the deluge was ordained to come upon it. In his five hundredth year God puts forth the threat, and in his six hundredth He brought the deluge upon the earth. Seest thou the breadth of God's loving-kindness, extending over the space of a hundred years? What He did then after the hundred years, could He not have done at once? but on purpose did He extend it to give room for repentance. Seest thou the goodness of God? And had those men repented, they would not have come short of His loving-kindness.

Let us proceed to others, who have been saved by repentance. Perchance some among the women will say, "I have committed whoredom and adultery, I have defiled my body with excesses; is there salvation?" Cast thine eyes, O woman, to Rahab, and do thou also expect salvation; for if she who openly and publicly committed whoredom was saved through repentance, shall not she who has committed one such act before the gift of grace be saved through penitence and fasting? For enquire how she was saved: this only said she "the Lord your God, He is God in heaven above, and in the earth beneath."

*Your* God, for she dared not call Him her own, on account of her unchastity. And if thou wouldest receive a written witness that she was saved, thou hast it recorded in the Psalms, "I will think upon Rahab and Babylon," but with this added, "with them that know me." On men therefore and likewise on women, is salvation, viz. that which is secured to us through repentance.

And though the people sin as one body, it does not surpass God's loving-kindness. The people made a calf, yet did not God give over His loving-kindness. Men denied God, but God denied not Himself. "These are thy gods O Israel" they said : yet again as was His wont, "the God of Israel became their Saviour." And not only did the people sin, but Aaron too the high-priest. For it is Moses who says, "And upon Aaron came the wrath of the Lord ; and I entreated," he says, "for him," and God forgave him. What then ? Did Moses, entreating for a high-priest who had sinned, prevail with the Lord, and does not Jesus, the Only-begotten, when He entreats for us, prevail with God ? And did He admit Aaron in spite of his fall to the high-priesthood, and will He obstruct thy entrance to salvation who art come from the Gentiles ? Repent, O man, henceforth thyself, and the gift shall not be withheld thee. Present thy conduct unrebukeable before Him henceforward ; for God is in very truth loving to man, nor can the whole race of man worthily tell out His loving-kindness. No,



not if all the tongues of men were to come together, could they even thus unfold some part of His loving-kindness. For we declare some part of what is written concerning His loving-kindness to men : but we know not how much He forgave to Angels : for them also did He forgive, since One only is sinless, Jesus, Who purgeth our sins.

Let us come to the blessed David, and take him for an ensample of repentance. He fell, that highly-gifted man. Walking in the evening-tide on the house-top, after his sleep, he looked unguardedly, and was moved by human passion. His sin was completed ; but in it perished not that nobleness of mind, which confesses a transgression. Nathan the Prophet came, swiftly, to detect and to heal his wound. "The Lord is wroth," he says, "and thou hast sinned." So spoke the subject to him who had the kingdom ; yet the king, though in purple clad, did not take it ill, as regarding not the speaker, but Him that sent him. He was not blinded by the military circle which stood about him ; for his mind discovered the Lord's Angelic Host, and as seeing the Invisible, he submitted in the anguish, replying to his visitor, or rather through him to Him Who sent him, "I have sinned against the Lord." Thou seest how a king could be humble-minded, how he could make confession. Had it been brought home to him by any one ? Were many privy to the matter ? The matter was done quickly, and forthwith the Prophet came an accuser, and the sinner acknow-

ledges the crime. And according to the frankness of his confession was the speed of his cure, for the Prophet Nathan who had threatened him, says straightway, "And the Lord hath put away thy sin." Thou seest how very quick was the relenting of the God of loving-kindness. Yet he says, "Thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme." For though on account of thy righteousness thou hadst many foes, yet thy self-command was thy protection; but now that thou hast let go thy best weapon, thy foes who were standing ready, are risen up against thee. The Prophet then thus comforted him.

But holy David, for all he heard it said, "The Lord hath put away thy sin," shrank not from penitence, king though he was: but put on sackcloth for purple, and for his gilded throne sat down, a king, in ashes on the ground; not only sat but fed on ashes (as he saith himself, "I have eaten ashes as it were bread,") and wasted with tears his lustful eye. "Every night" (he says) "wash I my bed and water my couch with my tears." When his lords urged him to eat bread, he would not: for seven whole days he prolonged his fast. If a king thus made confession, oughtest not thou a private man to make confession?

And after Absalom's rebellion, though he had many roads for escaping, he chose to flee by the Mount of Olives, all but invoking mentally the Redeemer who should thence ascend to heaven. And

when Shimei cursed him bitterly he said " Let him alone ;" for he knew that he who forgiveth shall be forgiven. Thou seest how excellent it is to confess. Thou seest that to the penitent, there is salvation.

Solomon also fell ; but what saith he ? " Afterwards I repented." Though Ahab, King of Samaria, was a most abandoned idolater ; a monster, the murderer of Prophets, a stranger to godliness, the coveter of other mens' fields and vineyards, yet when the Prophet Elias came to him, he rent his clothes, and put on sackcloth ; and what says the merciful God to Elias " Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before Me ?" As if almost He would persuade the fiery temper of the Prophet to condescend to the penitent ; for I will not bring, He saith, the evil in his days. Thus though Ahab on his pardon was not about to leave his evil courses, the God of pardon, pardoned him ;—not as ignorant of the future ; but bestowing on the penitence of the moment its corresponding pardon : for a just judge suitably answers each case as it arises.

Again as Jeroboam stood sacrificing to idols on the altar, his hand withered, when he bade seize the Prophet who denounced him. On this experience of his power, he says, " Entreat the face of the Lord thy God ;" and for this word his hand was restored. If the Prophet healed Jeroboam, has not Christ healing power to deliver thee from thy sins ? Manasses, again, was most extravagant in his crimes, who sawed asunder Esaias, and was polluted with idol-

atries of every kind, and filled Jerusalem with innocent blood : yet when he was led captive to Babylon, he converted his afflictions into a healing course of penitence : for Scripture says, that Manasses " humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, and prayed to Him ; and He was entreated of him, and heard his supplications, and brought him again into his kingdom."

If he who sawed a Prophet in sunder was saved through penitence, mayest not thou be saved, who hast not done ought so great ?

Beware lest thou rashly mistrust its power ; wouldest thou know how great force it hath ? Wouldest thou know this strong weapon of salvation, and learn what strength Confession hath ? An hundred and eighty-five thousand enemies did Hezekias turn to flight through Confession. Yet great as this really is, it is but trifling compared with what is still to be told.

Through repentance the same king recalled a Divine decree which had already gone forth. For when he was sick, Esaias said to him, " Set thy house in order, for thou shalt die, and not live." What was there to expect more ? What remaining hope of life, when the prophet said, " for thou shalt die ?" Yet Ezekias did not stop from penitence ; for remembering what was written, " For turning away and sighing thou shalt be saved," he turned away to the wall, and lifting his thoughts from his bed heavenwards, (for no thickness of walls hinders prayers

devoutly offered up,) he said, "Lord, remember me : for it is sufficient for my cure that Thou remember me. Thou art not controlled by times, but Thou Thyself givest law to life, for not on our nativity, and on stars in conjunction, depends our life, as some idly talk ; but of life and its duration Thou Thyself art the Lawgiver, according to Thy Will." And thus he, who through the Prophet's sentence despaired of life, received an addition of fifteen years, the sun, in sign of it, tracing his course back. Now the sun turned back for Ezekias ; for Christ it was eclipsed ; not retracing its steps, but suffering eclipse, and thereby shewing the difference of the two, Ezekias and Jesus. Ezekias prevailed to the cancelling a sentence of God ; and will not Jesus vouchsafe His free gift, the forgiveness of sins ?

Turn away, and bewail thyself, shut to thy door, and pray Him to forgive thee, and remove from around thee the burning fires ; for Confession has strength to quench even fire ; has strength to tame even lions. But if thou disbelieve, consider what befel Hananiah, and the rest. What fountains did they open ? How many waterpots had quenched a flame which rose to forty-nine cubits ? But wherever the flame exceeded ever so little, their faith gushed out like a river, and there they uttered a spell against their sufferings, saying, "Just art Thou, O Lord, over all things which Thou hast done towards us, for we have sinned and broke thy commandments." And penitence destroyed the flames.

If thou disbelieve that it can quench the fire of hell, learn it from the history of Hananiah. But some quick hearer will say, "Them God rescued justly; because they would not commit idolatry, God gave them this power." Since this has been suggested, I will proceed to one more example of penitence. What thinkest thou of Nebuchadonosor? Hast thou not heard from the Scriptures that he was blood-thirsty, savage, having a lion's mind? Hast thou not heard that he disinterred the bones of the kings? How he led the people into captivity? How he blinded the eyes of the reigning prince, first giving him to see the slaughter of his children? Hast thou not heard that he broke to pieces the cherubim, not the invisible—no, suppose it not, O man,—but the carved cherubim; and that mercy-seat, from which God used to speak audibly? Nebuchadonosor trampled down the veil of holiness: he carried off the censer to a temple of idols; he seized on all the offerings; and burned down the Temple to its foundations? What multiplied punishments did he deserve for slaying kings, setting fire to holy things, leading captive the chosen people, and placing the sacred vessels within idol temples? Was he not worthy of ten thousand deaths?

Such was the greatness of his evil deeds; now turn to the loving-kindness of God. He was turned into a wild beast; he abode in the wilderness, he was scourged that he might be saved. He had claws like a lion; for he made the saints his prey;

he had a lion's mane, for he was a ramping and a roaring lion. He ate grass as an ox ; for he was as cattle not knowing Him who had given him the kingdom. His body was bathed with dew, because he had already seen the fire quenched by dew, and believed not. And what happened? After these things he saith, "I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and I blessed the Most High, and I praised and honoured Him that liveth for ever." When therefore he perceived the Most High, and offered up sounds of thanksgiving unto God, and came to feel grief for what he had done, and learnt his own weakness, then God restored to him the honour of the kingdom.

What then? Hath He given Nebuchadonosor, after such acts, pardon, and the kingdom, on his confession, and shall He not give to thee on repenting, the forgiveness of sins, and the kingdom of heaven, if thy life be in accordance? The Lord is loving to men, and swift to pardon, slow to vengeance ; let no one then despair of his own salvation. Peter the chiefest and first of the Apostles before a little maid twice denied the Lord ; but when remorse touched him, he wept bitterly ; and to weep shews a heartfelt penitence. Wherefore not only received he forgiveness for the denial, but was spared his Apostolic dignity.

Having then, brethren, many ensamples of men who have sinned, and repented and been saved, do ye also heartily make your confession to the Lord ;

that ye may both receive the pardon of your past sins, and be counted worthy of the heavenly gift; and inherit the heavenly kingdom with all the saints in Jesus Christ: to Whom is the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

S. Cyril, Catechetical Lectures, ii.

## Second Monday.

[REALITY OF HELL. S. CHRYSOSTOM.

LET us be continually in mind of the awful judgment-seat, of the stream of fire, of the chains never to be loosed, of the darkness with no light, the gnashing of teeth, and the venomous worm.

"Ah, but God is merciful!" Are these then mere words? And was not that rich man punished for despising Lazarus? Are not the foolish virgins cast out of the Bride-chamber? Do not they who did not feed Him go away into "the fire prepared for the devil and his angels?" Will not he that hath soiled garments be "bound hand and foot" and go to ruin? Was not he that demanded the hundred pence to be paid, given over to the tormentors? Is not that said of the adulterers true? that "their worm shall not die, nor their fire be quenched?" Are these but mere threats then? Yea, it is an-



swered. And from what source pray dost thou venture to make such an assertion, and that too when thou passest judgment of thine opinion? Why, I shall be able to prove the contrary, both from what Christ said, and from what He did. For if you will not believe by the punishments that are to come, at least believe by those that have happened already. For what have happened, and have come forth into reality, surely are not threats and words. Who then was it that flooded the whole world in Noah's day, and effected that baleful wreck, and the utter destruction of one whole race? Who was it that after this, hurled those thunders and lightnings upon the land of Sodom? Who that drowned all Egypt in the sea? Who that consumed the six hundred thousand men in the wilderness? Who that burnt up the synagogue of Abiram? Who that bade the earth open her mouth to the company of Core and Dathan, and swallow them up? Who that carried off the threescore and ten thousand at one sweep in David's time? Shall I mention also those that were punished individually? Cain, who was given up to a continual vengeance? The son of Charmi, who was stoned with his whole family? Or him, that suffered the same thing for gathering sticks on the sabbath? The forty and two children in Elisha's time, who were consumed by those beasts, and obtained no pardon even on the score of their age? And if you would see these same things even after the times of grace, just con-

sider what great sufferings the Jews had, how the women ate their own children, some roasting them, and some consuming them in other ways? How after being given up to irremediable famine, and wars varied and severe, they threw all previous catastrophes into the shade by the exceeding greatness of their own calamities. For that it was Christ who did these things unto them, hear Him declaring as much, both by parables, and clearly and explicitly. By parables, as when He says, "But those that would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them;" and by that of the vineyard, and that of the marriage. But clearly and explicitly, as when He threatens them they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into the nations, and there shall be upon the earth "distress of nations with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring, and men's hearts failing them for fear. And there shall be tribulation, such as there never was from the beginning, no, nor ever shall be." And what a punishment Ananias too and Sapphira suffered, for the theft of a few pieces of money, ye all know. Seest thou not the daily calamities also? Or, have these too not taken place? Seest thou not now men that are pining with famine? those that suffer elephantiasis, or are maimed in body? Those that live in constant poverty, those that suffer countless, irreparable evils? How then will it be reasonable for some to be punished, and some not? For if God be not unjust,

(and unjust He is not,) thou also wilt assuredly suffer punishment if thou sinnest. But if it be because He is merciful that He doth not punish, then ought not these either to have been punished. But now because of these words of ours, God even here punisheth many, that when ye believe not the words of the threatening, the deeds of vengeance ye may at least believe. And since things of old do not affright us so much; by things which happen in every generation, He correcteth those that in every generation are growing listless.

And what is the reason, it may be said, why He doth not punish all here? That He may give the others an interval for repentance. Why then does He not take vengeance upon all in the next world? It is lest many should disbelieve in His Providence. How many robbers are there who have been taken, and how many that have left this life unpunished? Where is the mercy of God then, and His just judgment? It is my turn now to ask of thee? For supposing no one at all had vengeance taken upon him, then you might have taken refuge in this. But now that some are punished, and some are not, and this though they be the worse sinners, now can it be reasonable that there be not the same punishments for the same sins? How can those punished appear to be less than wronged? What reason is there then why all are not punished here? Hear the defence of Christ Himself for these things. For when some had died by the falling of a tower on them;

He said to those who raised a question upon this, "Suppose ye that they were sinners above all men? I tell you nay, but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish;" so exhorting us not to feel confident when others suffer punishment, and we ourselves, though we have committed many transgressions, do not. For except we change our conduct, we assuredly shall suffer. And how it may be said is it that we are to be punished without end for sinning a short time here? How, is it I ask that in this world, those who in a short moment of time have done one murder, are condemned to constant punishment in the mines? "But it is not God who does this!" it may be said. How then came He to keep the man with a palsy for thirty and eight years in so great punishments? For that it was for sins that He punished him, hear what He says, "Behold thou art made whole, sin no more, lest a worse thing come to thee." Still, it is said, he found a release. But the case is not so with the other life. For that there, there will never be any release, hear from His own mouth, "Their worm will not die, nor their fire be quenched." And, "these shall go into everlasting life, but these into everlasting punishment." Now if the life be eternal, the punishment is eternal. Seest thou not how severely He threatened the Jews? And have the things threatened come to pass, or were those that were told them a mere talk? "One stone shall not remain upon another!"

And has it remained? But what when He says, "There shall be tribulation such as hath not been." Has it come then? Read the history of Josephus, and thou wilt not be able to draw thy breath even, at only hearing what they suffered for their doings. This I say, not that I may pain you, but that I may make you secure, and lest by having humoured you over much, I should but make a way for the endurance of severe punishments. For why, pray, dost thou not deem it right thou shouldest be punished for sinning? Hath He not told thee all beforehand? Hath He not threatened thee? not made thee afraid? not done things even without number for thy salvation's sake? gave He thee not the laver of Regeneration, and forgave He not all thy former sins? Hath He not after this forgiveness, and the laver, also given thee the succour of repentance if thou sin? Hath He not made the way of forgiveness of sins, even after all this, easy to thee? Hear then what He hath enjoined. "If thou forgive thy neighbour, I also will forgive thee," He says. What hardship is there in this? "Judge the cause of the fatherless, and see that the widow have right, and come and let us converse together," He saith, "and if your sins be as purple, I will make them white as snow." What labour is there here? "Tell thy sins, that thou mayest be justified." What hardship is there in this? "Redeem thy sins with alms." What toilsomeness is there in this? The Publican said, "Be merciful to me a sinner," and "went down

home justified." What labour is it to imitate the Publican? And wilt thou not be persuaded even after this that there is punishment and vengeance? At that rate thou wilt deny that even the devil is punished. For "Depart," He says, "into the fire prepared for the devil and his angels." Now if there be no hell, then neither is he punished. But if he is punished, it is plain that we shall also. For we also have disobeyed, even if it be not in the same way. And how comest thou not to be afraid to speak such daring things? For when thou sayest that God is merciful, and doth not punish, if He should punish, He will be found in thy case to be no longer merciful. See then unto what language the devil leadeth you! And what! are the monks that have taken up with the mountains, and yield examples of such manifold self-denial, to go away without their crown? For if the wicked are not to be punished, and there is no recompence made to any one, some one else will say, perhaps, that neither are the good crowned. Nay, it will be said, For this is suitable with God, that there should be a Kingdom only, and not a hell. Well then, the whoremonger, and the adulterer, and the man who hath done evils unnumbered, enjoy the same advantages with the man who has exhibited soberness and holiness, and Paul is to stand with Nero, or rather even the devil with Paul! For if there be no hell, and yet a Resurrection be certain, then the wicked will attain to the same good things with the righteous!

And who would say this? Who even of men that were quite crazed? or rather, which of the devils even would say this? For even they confess that there is a hell. Wherefore also they cried out and said, "Art Thou come hither to torment us before the time?" How then comest thou not to fear and tremble, when even the devils confess what thyself art denying? Or how is it that thou dost not see who is the teacher of these evil doctrines? For he who deceived the first man, and under the pretext of greater hopes, threw them out even of the blessings they had in possession, he it is who now suggests the saying and fancying of these things. And for this reason he persuades some to suspect there is no hell, that he may thrust them into hell. As God, on the other hand, threateneth hell, and made hell ready, that by coming to know of it, thou mightest so live as not to fall into hell. And yet if, when there is a hell, the devil persuades thee to these things, how came the devils to confess it, if it did not exist, whose aim and desire it is that we should not suspect any thing of the kind, that through fearlessness we might become the more listless, and so fall with them into that fire? How then (it will be said) came they to confess it? It was through their not bearing the compulsion laid upon them. Taking all these things into consideration then, let those who talk in this way leave off deceiving both themselves and others, since even for these words of theirs they will be punished for detracting from those awful

things, and undoing the awe of many who are minded to be in earnest, and do not even do as much as the barbarian Ninevites, for they, though they were wholly ignorant of things, when they heard that the city was to be destroyed, were so far from disbelieving, that they even groaned, and girded themselves with sackcloth, and were confounded, and did not cease to use every means until they had allayed the wrath. But dost thou, who hast had so great experience of facts and of teaching, make light of what is told thee? The contrary then will be thy fate: For as they through fear of the words had not to undergo the vengeance in act, so thou who despisest the threatening by words, wilt have to undergo the punishment in very deed. And if now what thou art told seems a fable to thee, it will not, however, seem so when the very things convince thee.—Then! Have you never noticed what He did even in this world? How when He met with two thieves, He counted them not worthy of the same estate, but one He led into the Kingdom, and the other He sent away into hell? And why speak I of a robber and murderer? For even an Apostle He did not spare, when he had become a traitor, but even when He saw him rushing to the halter, and hanging, and bursting asunder in the midst, (for he did “burst asunder, and all his bowels gushed out,”) still when He foresaw all these things, He let him suffer all the same, giving thee from the present a proof of all that is in the other world also. Do not then cheat



yourselves, through being persuaded of the devil. These devices are his. For if both judges, and masters, and teachers, and savages, respect the good, and punish the evil, with what reason is the contrary to be the case with God, while the good man and he who is not so are deemed worthy of the same estate? And when will there be any release from wickedness? For they who are now expecting punishment, and are amongst so many terrors, those from the judges, those from the laws, and yet do not depart from iniquity; when on their departing this life they are to lay aside even this fear; and are not only not to be cast into hell, but are even to obtain a kingdom; when will they leave doing wickedly? Is this then mercy, pray, to add to wickedness, to set up rewards for iniquity, to count the sober and the unchastened, the faithful and the irreligious, Paul and the devil, to have the same deserts? But how long am I to be trifling? Wherefore I exhort you to get you free from this madness, and having grown to be your sure masters, persuade your souls to fear and to tremble, that they may at once be saved from the hell to come, and may, after passing the life in this world soberly, attain unto the good things to come, by the grace and love towards man, &c.

S. Chrysostom. Epistle to the Romans, Hom. xxv.

**Second Tuesday.****MAN'S VAIN EXCUSES FOR SIN.****S. CHRYSOSTOM.**

If we intend at the same time to be always at enmity with God and yet to claim forgiveness at His hand, we shall never cease to be at enmity, and to be wanton, to grow in depravity and to be blind to the Sun of Righteousness which has arisen. Wouldest thou admit the ray that shall open thine eyes? Render them then good, and sound, and quick-sighted. He hath shewed them the true light; if thou shunnest it, and runnest back again into the darkness, what shall be thy excuse? What sort of allowance shall be made for thee? None from that moment. This surely is a mark of unspeakable enmity. When indeed thou knewest not God; then, if thou wert at enmity with Him, thou hadst, be it how it might, some excuse. But when thou hadst tasted the goodness and the honey, if thou again abandonest them, and turnest to thine own vomit, what else art thou doing but bringing forward evidences of excessive hatred and contempt? "Nay," if thou wilt say, "but I am constrained to it by nature; I love Christ indeed, but I am constrained by nature." If thou art under the power and force of

constraint, thou wilt have allowance made ; but if thou yield from indolence, not for a moment.

Now then, come, let us examine this very question, whether sins are the effect of force and constraint, or of indolence and great carelessness. The Law says, "Thou shalt not kill." What sort of force, what sort of violence is there here ? Violence indeed it is to kill, for who amongst us would as a matter of choice plunge his sword into the throat of his neighbour, and stain his hand with blood ? Not one. Thou seest then that, on the contrary, sin itself is more properly matter of violence and constraint. For God hath implanted in our nature a charm, which binds us to love one another. "Every beast" (it saith) "loveth his like, and man his neighbours." Seest thou that we have from our nature seeds which tend to virtue, whereas those of vice are contrary to nature ? And if these latter predominate, this is but an evidence of our exceeding indolence.

Again what is adultery ? What sort of necessity is there to bring us to this ? Doubtless it will be said—the tyranny of lust. But why, tell me, should this be ? What, is it not in every one's power to have his own wife, and thus to put a stop to this tyranny ? True he will say, but it is a sort of passion. Here the question is no longer one of necessity. Passion is no matter of necessity : no one loves of necessity, but of deliberate choice and free will. Indulgence of nature is indeed perhaps mat-

ter of necessity ; but to love one woman rather than another is no matter of necessity. Nor indeed is the matter in question natural desire, but vanity, and wantonness, and unbounded licentiousness. For which is according to reason, that a man should have an espoused wife, and her the mother of his children ; or one not acknowledged ? This therefore is not the fault of nature. Blame not natural desire. The laws too know how to make allowance for those sins which are of necessity ;—or rather there is no such thing as a sin of necessity, but all arises from wantonness. God hath not so framed man's nature, as that he should have any necessity to sin ; since were this the case, there would be no such thing as punishment. We ourselves exact no account of things done of necessity and by constraint, much less would God, so full of mercy and loving-kindness.

Again, what is stealing ? Is it a matter of necessity ? Yes, a man will say, because poverty causes this. Poverty however rather compels us to work, not to steal. Poverty therefore has in fact the contrary effect. Theft is the effect of idleness, whereas poverty produces usually not idleness, but a love of begging. So that this sin is the effect of indolence, as you may learn from hence. Which I ask is the more difficult, the more distasteful, to wander about at night without sleep, to break open houses, and walk about in the dark, and to have one's life in one's hand, and to be always prepared for murder, and to be shivering and dead with fear ; or to be

attending to one's daily task, in full enjoyment of safety and security? This last is the easier task; and it is because this is easier, that the majority practise it rather than the other. Thou seest then that it is virtue which is according to nature, and vice which is against nature, in the same way as disease and health are.

What again are falsehood and perjury? What necessity can they possibly imply? None whatever, nor any compulsion. It is a matter to which to proceed voluntarily. We are distrusted, it will be said. True; distrusted we are, because we choose it. For we might, if we would, be trusted more upon our character, than upon our oath. Why, tell me, is it that we do not trust some, no not on their oath, while we deem others trustworthy, even independently of oaths? Seest thou that there is no need of oaths in any case? When such an one speaks, we say, "I believe him, even without an oath, but thee, no not with thy oaths." Thus then an oath is unnecessary, and is in fact an evidence rather of distrust than of confidence. For when a man is over ready to take his oath, he does not leave us to entertain any good idea of his scrupulousness. So that the man that is most constant in his use of oaths, has on no occasion any necessity for using one, and he who never uses one on any occasion, has in himself the full benefit of its use. Hence it will follow that in no case is there any necessity for an oath to produce confidence; since we see that they

are the more readily trusted, who abstain from taking oath.

But again, if a man is injurious. Is this a matter of necessity? Yes, he will say, because his passion carries him away, and burns within him, and will never let the soul be at rest. Then, the violence is not the effect of anger, but of bitterness of mind. Were it the effect of anger, all men, whenever they were angry, would never cease committing acts of violence. We have resentment given us, not that we may commit acts of violence on our neighbours, but that we may correct those that are in sin, that we may bestir ourselves to prevent our becoming sluggish. Anger is implanted in us as a sort of sting, to make us gnash with our teeth against the Devil, to make us thus vehement against *him*, not to set us in array against each other. We have arms given us, not to make us at war amongst ourselves, but that we may employ our whole armour against the enemy. Art thou prone to anger? Be so against thine own sins: chastise thy soul, scourge thy conscience. Be a severe judge, and merciless in thy sentence against thine own sins. This is the way to turn anger to account. It was for this that God implanted it within us.

But again. Is plunder a matter of necessity? No, in no wise. Tell me, what manner of necessity is there to be grasping? what manner of compulsion? Poverty, a man will say, causes it, and the want of common necessities. Now this is the very

reason why you ought *not* to be grasping. Wealth so gotten has no security in it. You are doing the very same thing as a man would do, who, if he were asked, why he laid the foundation of his house in the sand, should say, he did it because of the frost and rain. Whereas this would be the very reason why he should *not* lay it in the sand. They are the very foundations which the rain, and blasts, and wind most quickly overturn. So that if thou wouldst be wealthy, never be rapacious—if thou wouldst transmit wealth to thy children, get righteous wealth, —at least if any there be that is such. Because this abides, and remains firm, whereas that which is not such, quickly wastes and perishes. Tell me, hast thou a mind to be rich, and dost thou take the goods of others? Surely this is not wealth. Wealth consists in retaining what is thine own. He that is in possession of the goods of others, never can be a wealthy man; since at that rate even your silk-venders, because they bear the price consigned to them by others, would be the wealthiest and richest of men. Though for the time indeed it is theirs, still we do not call them wealthy notwithstanding; and why forsooth? Because they are in possession of what belongs to others.

However, if at any rate thou desirest to be wealthy, (for the matter is not one of necessity,) what greater good is it that thou wouldst fain enjoy? Is it a longer life? Yet surely men of this character are short-lived. Often times they

pay the penalty of plunder and rapaciousness by an untimely death, and not only by the loss of the enjoyment of their gains, but by a departure, having gained but little, and Hell to boot. Often times too they die of diseases, which are the fruits of self-indulgence, of toil, and of anxiety. Fain would I understand why it is that wealth is so eagerly pursued by mankind. It is surely for this reason that God hath set a limit and a boundary to our nature, that we may have no need to go on seeking wealth beyond it, and hath commanded us, for instance, to clothe the body in one, or perhaps in two garments, and there is no need of any more to cover us. Where is the good of ten thousand changes of raiment, and those moth-eaten? The stomach has its appointed bound, any thing given beyond this, will of necessity destroy the whole man. Where then is the use of your herds, and flocks, and cutting up of flesh? We require but one roof to shelter us. Where then is the use of your vast ground-plots and costly buildings? Dost strip the poor, that vultures and jack-daws may have where to dwell? And what a hell do not these things deserve? Many are frequently raising splendid edifices, with pillars and costly marbles, in places which they never so much as saw. What scheme is there that they have not adopted? Yet neither themselves reap the benefit nor any one else. You see that these things are not done for profits' sake, but in all these cases folly and absurdity, and vain-glory, is the motive. And this, I



beseech you, let us avoid, that we may be exalted to avoid also every other evil, and may obtain those good things which are promised to them that love Him, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

S. Chrysostom, Hom. ii. on Ephes. i.

## Second Wednesday.

### THINGS TEMPORAL, AND THINGS ETERNAL. S. CHRYSOSTOM.

SINCE then "the things that are seen are temporal, but the things that are not seen are eternal," let us look to them. For what excuse can we have, if we choose the temporal instead of the eternal? For even if the present be pleasurable, yet it is not abiding; whilst the woe it entails is abiding and irremissible. For what excuse will they have who have been counted worthy of the Spirit, and have enjoyed so great a gift, if they become of grovelling mind and fall down to earth. For I hear many saying these words worthy of all scorn, "Give me to-day and take to-morrow! For" saith one, "if indeed there be such things there, as ye affirm, then it is one for one: but if there be no such thing at all, then it is two for nothing." What can be more

lawless than these words, or what more idle prating? We are discoursing about Heaven, and those unspeakable good things, and thou bringest forth unto us the terms of the race-course, yet art not ashamed, nor hidest thy face, whilst uttering such things as befit maniacs? Blushest thou not that art so rivetted to the present things? Wilt thou not cease from being distraught, and beside thyself, and in youth a dotard? Were Greeks indeed to talk in this way, it were no marvel; but that believers should vent such dotage, of what forgiveness doth it admit? For dost thou hold those immortal hopes in utter suspicion? Dost thou think these things to be utterly doubtful? And in what are these things deserving of pardon? "And who hath come," saith one, "and brought back word what is there?" Of men indeed not any one, but God, more trustworthy than all, hath declared these things. But thou beholdest not what is there, neither dost thou see God. Wilt thou then deny that there is a God, because thou seest Him not? "Yes," he replies, "I firmly believe there is a God!" If then an infidel should ask thee, "And who came from Heaven and brought back word of this," what wilt thou answer? Whence dost thou know that there is a God? "From the things that are seen," he answers, "from the fair order existing through the whole creation, from its being manifest to all." Therefore receive also in the same way the doctrine of the judgment. "How?" he asks. I will question thee and do thou answer

me. Is this God just, and will He render to each according to his deserving; or, on the contrary, doth He will the wicked should live happily and in luxury, and the good in the contrary things? "By no means," he answers, "for man even would not feel thus." Where then shall they, who have done virtuously here, enjoy the things that be good, and where the wicked the opposites, except there is to be a life and retribution hereafter? Seest thou that at présent it is one for one, and not two for one? . .

. . . "And wherefore," saith one, "doth He not punish here?" That He may display that long-suffering of His, and may offer to us the salvation that cometh by repentance, and not make our race to be swept away, nor pluck away those who by an excellent change are able to be saved, before that salvation. For if He instantly punished upon the sins, and destroyed, how should Paul have been saved, how should Peter, those chief teachers of the world? How should David have reaped the salvation that came by his repentance? How the Galatians? How many others? For this reason then He neither exacts the penalty from all here, but only from some out of all, nor yet these from all, but from one here and from another there; that He may both rouse those who are exceedingly insensible by means of those whom He punishes, and may cause them to expect the future things by those whom He punishes not. Or seest thou not many punished here, as those for instance, who were buried

under the ruins of that tower ; as those whose blood Pilate mingled with their sacrifices ; as those who perished by an untimely death amongst the Corinthians, because they partook unworthily of the mysteries ; as Pharaoh, as those of the Jews who were slain by the barbarians, as many others, both then and now and continually ? And yet others too, having sinned in many things, departed without suffering the penalty here ; as the rich man in the story of Lazarus, as many others. Now these things He does, both to arouse those who quite disbelieve in the things to come, and to make those who do believe and are careless more diligent. "For God is a righteous Judge, and strong, and long-suffering, and visits not with wrath every day." But if we abuse this long-suffering, there will come a time when He will no more suffer long, even for a little, but will straightway visit with the penalty.

Let us not then, that for a single moment (for such is the present life,) we may live luxuriously, draw on ourselves punishment through endless ages ; but let us toil for a moment, that we may be crowned for ever. See ye not, that even in worldly things most men act in this manner, and choose a brief toil in order to a long rest, even though the opposite falls out unto them ? For, in this life indeed, there is an equal portion of toils and rewards—yea, often, on the contrary, the toil is endless whilst the fruit is little, or not even a little, oftentimes ; but in the case of the Kingdom conversely, the labour is little,

whilst the pleasure is great and boundless. For consider, the husbandman wearieth himself the whole year through, and at the very end of his hope oftentimes misses of the fruit of those many toils. The shipmaster again, and the soldier, until extreme old age, are occupied with wars and labours; and oftentimes hath each of them departed, the one with the loss of his wealthy cargoes, the other along with victory of life itself. What excuse then shall we have, tell me, if in worldly matters indeed we prefer what is laborious in order that we may rest for a little, or not a little even, (for the hope of this is uncertain,) but in spiritual things do the converse of this, and draw upon ourselves unutterable punishments for a little sloth? Wherefore I beseech you all, though late, yet still at length to recover from this frenzy. For none shall deliver us in that day; neither brother, nor father, nor child, nor friend, nor neighbour, nor any other, but if our works play us false, all will be over, and we must needs perish. How many lamentations did that rich man make, and besought the Patriarch, and begged that Lazarus might be sent. But hear what Abraham said unto him; "There is a gulf betwixt us and you, so that they who wish to go forth cannot pass thither." How many petitions did those virgins make to their fellows, for a little oil! But hear what they also say; "Lest there be not enough for you and for us!" and none was able to bring them into the bridal chamber.

Thinking then on these things, let us also be care-

ful of that which is our life. For mention what toils soever, and bring forward besides what punishment soever, all these combined will be nothing in comparison of the good things to come. Instance, therefore, if thou wilt, fire and steel, and wild beasts, and if there be ought sorer than these, but yet these are not even a shadow, unto those torments. For these things, when applied in excess, become then especially light, making the release speedy, since the body sufficeth not unto intensity at once, and long continuance of suffering; but *there* it is not so, but both meet together, both prolongation and excess, both in the good and the grievous. Whilst we have time, then, let us prevent His presence with confession; that in that day we may behold Him gentle and serene, that we may escape altogether those threat-bearing powers. Seest thou not how this world's soldiers, who perform the bidding of those in authority, drag men about; how they chain, how they scourge them, how pierce their sides, how apply torches to their torments, how dismember them! Yet all these things are but plays and jokes unto *those* punishments. For these punishments are temporal; but there neither the worm dieth, nor is the fire quenched: for that body, of all, is incorruptible, which is then to be raised up. But God grant that we may never learn these things by experience, but that these fearful things may never be nearer unto us than in the mention of them, and that we be not delivered over to those tormentors,

but may be hence made wise. How many things shall we then say in accusation of ourselves! How many lamentations shall we utter! How many groans! But it will thenceforth be of no avail. For neither can sailors, when the ship hath gone to pieces, and hath sunk, thereafter be of any service, nor physicians, when the patient is departed; but they will often say indeed that so and so ought to have been done; but all is fruitless and in vain. For as long indeed as hopes remain from amendment, one ought both to say and do every thing; but when we have no longer any thing in our power, all being quite ruined, it is to no purpose that all is said and done. For the Jews even will then say, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord," but will be able to reap none advantage of this cry towards escaping their punishment, for when they ought to have said it, they said it not. That then this be not the case with us, in respect to our life, let us now and from this time reform, that we may stand at the tribunal of Christ with all boldness, whereunto may all of us attain, through the grace and love toward men of our Lord Jesus Christ, with Whom to the Father, with the Holy Spirit, be glory and might for ever and ever. Amen.

S. Chrysostom, on 2 Corinthians, Hom. ix.

**Second Thursday.****THE CHURCH'S FAILURE.****S. CHRYSOSTOM.**

THE Church indeed is in very evil case, although ye think her affairs to be in peace. For the mischief of it is, that while we labour under so many evils, we do not even know that we have any. What sayest thou? "We are in possession of our Churches, our Church-property, and all the rest, the services are held, the congregation comes to Church every day." True, but one is not to judge of the state of a Church from these things. From what then? Whether there be piety, whether we return home with profit each day, whether reaping some fruit, be it much or little, whether we do it not merely of routine, and for the formal acquittance of a duty. Who has become a better man by attending daily service for a whole month? That is the fruit: otherwise the very thing which seems to bespeak a flourishing condition of the Church, does in fact bespeak an ill condition, when all this is done, and nothing comes of it. Would to God that were all, that nothing comes of it; but indeed, as things are, it turns out even for the worse! What fruit do ye get from your services? Surely if you were



getting any profit by them, ye ought to have been long leading the life of true wisdom, with so many Prophets twice in every week discoursing to you, so many Apostles, and Evangelists, all setting forth the doctrines of salvation, and placing before you with much exactness that which can form the character aright. The soldier, by going to his drill, becomes more perfect in his tactics; the wrestler, by frequenting the gymnastic ground, becomes more skilful in wrestling; the physician, by attending on his teacher, becomes more accurate, and knows more, and learns more: and thou—what hast thou gained? I speak not to those who have been members of the Church only a year, but to those who from their earliest age have been attending the services. Think you that to be religious is to be constant in Church-going? This is nothing, unless we reap some fruit for ourselves; if from the gathering together in Church we do not gather something for ourselves, it were better to remain at home. For our forefathers built the Churches for us, not just to bring us together from our private houses and shew us one to another; since this could have been done also in a market-place, and in baths, and in a public procession:—but to bring together learners and teachers, and make the one better by means of the other. With us it has all become mere customary routine, and formal discharge of a duty: a thing we are used to; that is all. Easter comes, and then great the stir, great the hubbub, and crowding of—I had

rather not call them human beings, for their behaviour is not commonly human. Easter goes, the tumult abates, but then the quiet which succeeds is again fruitless of good. "Vigils, and holy hymn singing." And what is got by these? Nay, it is all the worse. Many do so merely out of vanity. Think how sick at heart it must make one, to see it all like so much water poured into a cask with holes in it! But ye will assuredly say to me, We know the Scriptures. And what of that? If ye exemplify the Scriptures by your works, that is the gain, that the profit. The Church is a dyer's vat: if time after time perpetually ye go hence without receiving any dye, what is the use of coming here continually? Why, the mischief is all the greater. Who of you has added ought to the customary practices he received from his fathers? For example: such an one has a custom of observing the memorial of his mother, or his wife, or his child; this he does whether he be told or whether he be not told by us, drawn to it by force of habit and conscience. Does this displease thee, you ask? God forbid: on the contrary, I am glad of it with all my heart; only, I would wish that he had gained some fruit also from our discoursing, and that the effect which habit has were also the effect as regards us your teachers—the superinducing of another habit. Else why do I weary myself in vain, and talk uselessly, if ye are to remain in the same state, if the Church services work no good in you? Nay, you will say, we pray.

And what of that? "Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven." Many a time have I determined to hold my peace, seeing no benefit accruing to you from my words; or perhaps there does accrue some, but I, through insatiableness and strong desire, am affected in the same way as those that are mad after riches. For just as they, however much they may get, think they have nothing; so I, because I ardently desire your salvation, until I see you to have made good progress, think nothing done, because of my exceeding eager desire that you should arrive at the very summit. I would that this were the case, and that my eagerness were in fault, not your sloth; but I fear I conjecture but too rightly. For ye must needs be persuaded, that if any benefit had arisen in all this length of time, we ought ere now to have done speaking. In such case there were no need to you of words, since both in those already spoken there had been enough said for you, and you would be yourselves able to correct others. But the fact, that there is still a necessity of our discoursing to you, only shews that matters with you are not in a state of high perfection. Then what would we have to be brought about? for one must not merely find fault. I beseech and entreat you not to think it enough to have invaded the Church, but that ye also withdraw hence, having taken somewhat, some medicine for the curing of

your own maladies, and, if not from us, at any rate from the Scriptures, ye have the remedies suitable for each. For instance, is any passionate? Let him attend to the Scripture readings, and he will of a surety find such either in history or exhortation. In exhortation, when it is said, "The sway of his fury is his destruction;" and, "A passionate man is not seemly;" and such like: and again, "A man full of words shall not prosper:" and Christ again, "He that is angry with his brother without a cause;" and again the Prophet, "Be ye angry, and sin not;" and, "Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce." And in histories, as when thou hearest of Pharaoh filled with much wrath, and the Assyrian. Again, is any one taken captive by love of money? let him hear, that "There is not a more wicked thing than a covetous man; for this man setteth even his own soul for sale;" and how Christ saith, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon;" and the Apostle, that "the love of money is the root of all evil;" and the Prophet, "If riches flow in, set not your heart upon them;" and many other like sayings. And from the histories thou hearest of Gehazi, Judas, the chief scribes, and that "gifts blind the eyes of the wise." Is another proud? Let him hear, that, "God resisteth the proud;" and, "Pride is the beginning of sin;" and, "Every one that hath a high heart, is impure before the Lord." And in the histories, the devil, and all the rest. In a word, since it is impossible to recount all, let each choose out

from the Divine Scriptures the remedies for his own hurts. So wash out, if not the whole at once, a part at any rate, part to-day and part to-morrow, and then the whole. And with regard to repentance too, and confession, and alms-giving, and justice also, and temperance, and all other things, thou wilt find many examples. "For all these things," says the Apostle, "were written for our admonition." If then Scripture, in all its discoursing, is for our admonition, let us attend to it as we ought. Why do we deceive ourselves in vain? I fear it may be said of us also, that "our days have fallen short in vanity, and our years with haste." Who from hearing us has given up the theatres? Who has given up his covetousness? Who has become more ready for alms-giving? I would wish to know this, not for the sake of vain-glory, but that I may be inspirited to more zeal, seeing the fruit of my labours to be clearly evident. But as things now are, how shall I put my hand to the work, when I see that for all the rain of doctrine pouring down upon you shower after shower, still our crops remain at the same measure, and the plants have waxed none the higher! Anon the time of thrashing is at hand, and He with the fan. I fear me lest it be all stubble: I fear, lest we be all cast into the furnace. The summer is past, the winter is come: we sit, both young and old, taken captive by our own evil passions. Tell not me, I do not commit fornication; for what art thou the better, if though thou be no

fornicator, thou art covetous ? It matters not to the sparrow caught in the snare that he is not held tight in every part, but only by the foot, he is a lost bird for all that ; in the snare he is, and it profits him not that he has his wings free, so long as his foot is held tight. Just so thou art caught, not by fornication, but by love of money ; but caught thou art nevertheless ; and the point is, not *how* thou art caught, but *that* thou art caught. Let not the young man say, I am no money lover : well, but perchance thou art a fornicator : and then again what art thou the better ? For the fact is, it is not possible for all the passions to set upon us at one and the same time of life ; they are divided and marked off, and that, through the mercy of God, that they may not, by assailing us all at once, become insuperable, and so our wrestling with them be made more difficult. What wretched inertness it shews, not to be able to conquer our passions even when taken one by one, but to be defeated at each several period of our life, and to take credit to ourselves for those which let us alone, not in consequence of our own hearty endeavours, but merely because, by reason of the time of life, they are dormant. Look at the chariot-drivers, do you not see how exceedingly careful and strict they are with themselves in their training-practice, their labours, their diet, and all the rest, that they may not be thrown down from their chariots, and dragged along by the reins. See what a thing art is. Often even a strong man can-

not master a single horse ; but a mere boy who has learnt the art shall often take the pair in hand, and with ease lead them and drive them where he will. Nay, in India, it is said, that a huge monster of an elephant shall yield to a stripling of fifteen, who manages him with the utmost ease. To what purpose have I said all this ? To shew that, if by dint of study and practice, we can throttle into submission even elephants and wild horses, much more the passions within us. Whence is it that throughout life we continually fail in every encounter ? We have never practised this art. Never in a time of leisure, when there is no contest, talked over with ourselves what shall be useful for us. We were never to be seen in our place on the chariot, until the time for the contest is actually come. Hence the ridiculous figure we make there. Have I not often said, Let us practise ourselves upon those of our own family before the time of trial ? With our servants at home we are often exasperated, let us there quell our anger, that in our intercourse with our friends we may come to have it easily under control. And so, in the case of all the other passions, if we practised ourselves beforehand, we should not make a ridiculous figure in the contests themselves. But now we have our implements and our exercises and our trainings for other things, for art and feats of the palæstra, but for virtue nothing of the sort. The husbandman would not venture to meddle with a vine, unless he had first been prac-

tised in the culture of it ; nor the pilot to sit by the helm, unless he had first practised himself well at it : but we in all respects unpractised, wish for the first prizes ! It were good to be silent, good to have no communication with any man in act or word, until we were able to charm the wild beast that is within us. The wild beast, I say, for indeed is it not worse than the attack of any wild beast, when wrath and lust make war upon us ? Beware of invading the market-place with these beasts, until thou have got the muzzle well upon their mouths, until thou have tamed and made them tractable. Those who lead about their tame lions in the market-place, do you not see what a gain they make of it, what admiration they get, because in the irrational beast they have succeeded in producing such tameness : but should the lion suddenly take a savage fit, how he scares all the people out of the market-place, and then both the man that leads him about is himself in danger, and if there be loss of life to others, it is his doing. Well, then, do thou also first tame thy lion, and so lead him about, not for the purpose of receiving money, but that thou mayest acquire a gain to which there is none equal. For there is nothing equal to gentleness, which both to those that possess it, and to those who are its objects, is exceeding useful. This then let us follow after, that having kept in the way of virtue, and with all diligence finished our course therein, we may be enabled to attain unto the good things eternal,



through the grace and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, with Whom, to the Father and the Holy Ghost together, be glory, might, honour, now and ever, world without end. Amen.

S. Chrysostom, on Acts of the Apostles. Hom. xxix.

## **Second Friday.**

### **THE RESURRECTION, AND ITS FRUITS TO THE WICKED.**

**S. CHRYSOSTOM.**

THE Prophets indeed, wishing to shew the credibility of the things said by them, before all other things, say this, "The vision which Isaiah saw," and again, "The word of the Lord, which came to Jeremiah," and again, "Thus saith the Lord," with many such expressions. And many of them even saw God sitting, as far as it was possible for them to see Him. But Paul, not having seen Him sitting, but having Christ speaking in himself, instead of "Thus saith the Lord," said, "Do ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me." And again, "Paul, an Apostle of Jesus Christ," shewing that nothing is of himself. For the "Apostle" speaks the things of Him Who sent him. And again, "I think also that

I have the Spirit of God." All those things therefore he spake by the Spirit, but this which he now says, he heard even expressly from God. As also that which he said, discoursing to the elders of Ephesus: "It is more blessed to give than to receive," he heard among things not recorded.

Let us then see what he now also says. "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the last trump." Which Christ also then said, "The powers of the heavens shall be shaken." But wherefore with the trumpet? For we see this on Mount Sinai too, and Angels there also. But what means the voice of the Archangel? As he said in the parable of the Virgins, "Arise! the Bridegroom cometh." Either he says this, or that, as in the case of a king, so also shall it then be, Angels ministering at the Resurrection. For he says, let the dead arise, and the work is done, the Angels not having power to do this, but His word. As if a king should command and say, "Let those who were shut up go forth, and let the servants lead them out." They do not this however from their own power, but from that voice. This also Christ says in another place, "He shall send His Angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the

other." And everywhere you see the Angels running to and fro. The Archangel therefore, I think, is he who is set over those who are sent forth, and who shouts thus : " Make all ready, for the Judge is at hand." And what is " at the last trumpet ?" Here he implies that there are many trumpets, and that at the last the Judge descends. " And the dead in Christ," He says, " shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air ; and so shall we ever be with the Lord." Ver. 18. " Wherefore comfort ye one another with these words."

If He is about to descend, on what account shall we be " caught up ?" For the sake of honour ? For when a king enters into a city, those who are in honour go out to meet him. But the condemned await the judge within. And upon the coming of an affectionate father, his children indeed and, those who are worthy to be his children, are taken out in a chariot, that they may see and kiss him. But those who have offended, remain within the house. We are carried upon the chariot of our Father. For He received Him up in the clouds, and " we shall be caught up in the clouds." Seest thou how great is the honour ? And as He descends, we go forth to meet him ; and, what is more blessed than all, there we shall be with Him.

" Who shall speak of the mightinesses of the Lord, and make all His praises to be heard ?" How many

blessings has He vouchsafed to the human race? Those who are dead are raised first, and thus the meeting takes place together. Abel, who died before all, shall then meet Him, together with those who are alive. So that they, in this respect, will have no advantage; but he who is corrupted, and has been so many years in the earth, shall meet Him with them, and so all others. For if they awaited us, that we might be crowned, as elsewhere he says in an Epistle, "God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect," much more shall we also await them, or rather, they indeed awaited, but we not at all. For the Resurrection takes place "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye."

But the saying, that they are gathered together, shews that they arise indeed everywhere, but are gathered together by the Angels. The rising again, therefore, is the work of the power of God commanding the earth to give up its deposit, and there is no one who ministers in it. As He then called Lazarus, "Lazarus, come forth." But the gathering is the work of ministers. But if the Angels gather them together, and run to and fro, how are they caught up here? They are caught up after the descent, after that, they are gathered together.

For this is also done without any one being aware. For when they see the earth agitated, the dust mingling, the bodies rising perchance on every side, no one ministering to this, but the shout being sufficient

to empty the whole earth that was filled, (for consider how great a thing it is that all from Adam unto His coming should then stand with their wives and children,) when they see so great a tumult upon the earth,—then they shall know. As therefore in the dispensation that was in the flesh, they had foreseen nothing of it, so also will it then be. When these things then are done, then also will be the voice of the Archangel, shouting and commanding the Angels, and the trumpets, or rather the sound of the trumpet. What trembling, then, what fear will possess those that remain upon the earth! For one woman is caught up, and another is left behind, and one man is taken, and another is passed over. What will be the state of their souls, when they see some indeed taken up, but themselves left behind? Will not these things be able to shake their souls more terribly than any hell? Let us suppose then in word, that this is now present. For if sudden deaths, and earthquakes in cities, and threatenings, thus affect our souls; when we see the earth breaking up and crowded with all these, when we hear the trumpet and the voice of the Archangel thrilling louder than any trumpet, when we perceive the heaven shrivelled up, and God, the King of all, coming nigh,—what then will be our souls? Let us shudder, I beseech you, and be terrified, as if these things were now taking place. Let us not comfort ourselves by the delay, for when it must certainly happen, the delay will profit us nothing.

How great will then be the fear and trembling ! Have you ever seen men led away to death ? What do you think is the state of their souls, as they are going on the way to the gate ? Is it not worse than many deaths ? What would they not choose both to do and to suffer, so that they might be delivered from that cloud of darkness ! I have heard many say, who have been recalled by the mercy of the king, after having been led away, that they did not even see men as men, their souls being so troubled, so horror-struck, and beside themselves. If then the death of the body thus terrifies us ; when eternal death approaches, what will be our feelings ? And why do I speak of those who are led away ? A crowd there stands around, the greater part not even knowing them. If any one looked into their souls, no one is so cruel, no one so hard-hearted, no one so firm, as not to have his soul dejected and relaxed with fear and despair. And if when others are taken off by this death, which differs nothing from sleep, those who are not concerned in it are thus affected, when we ourselves fall into greater evils, what then will be our state ? It is not, believe me, it is not possible to represent the suffering by words.

Nay, you say, but God is merciful, and none of these things will happen ! Then it is written in vain ! No, you say, but only as a threat, that we may become wise. If then we are not wise, but continue evil, will He not, tell me, inflict the punishment ? Will He not then either recompense the

good with rewards? Yes, you say, for that is becoming to Him, to do good even beyond desert. So that these things indeed are true, and will certainly be, but the punishments will not really be, but only for the purpose of a threat, and of terror! By what means I shall persuade you I know not. If I say that "their worm will not die, and their fire will not be quenched;" if I say that they "shall depart into everlasting fire;" if I set before you the rich man already punished, you will say that it is all a matter of threatening. Whence then shall I persuade you? For this is Satanic reasoning, indulging you with a favour that will not profit, and causing you to be slothful.

How then can we banish it? Whatever things we say from Scripture you will say are for the purpose of threatening. But with respect to future things this indeed may be said, but not so concerning things that have happened, and have had an end. You have all heard of the deluge. And were those things also said by way of threat? Did they not actually happen? Those men too said many such things, and for a hundred years while the ark was building, and the wood was being wrought, and the righteous man was calling aloud, there was no one who believed. But because they did not believe the threat in words, they suffered the punishment in very deed. And this will be our fate too, if we shall not have believed. On this account it is that He compares His coming with the days of Noah, because as some disbelieved in that deluge,

so will they in the deluge of hell. Was that a threat? was it not a fact? Then will not He, Who then brought punishment upon them so suddenly, much more inflict it now? For the things that are committed now are not less than the offences of that time. How? Because then it says, "the sons of God went in unto the daughters of men." And these mixtures were the great offence. But now there is no form of wickedness which is unattempted. Do you then believe that the deluge took place, or does it seem to you a fable? And yet the mountains where the ark rested bear witness. I speak of those in Armenia. But even superabundantly, I will turn my discourse to another thing more evident than that. Has any one of you ever travelled in Palestine? For I will no longer mention report, but facts, and yet the other were clearer than facts. For those things which the Scripture says, are more to be trusted than things we see. Has any one of you then ever travelled in Palestine? I suppose so. Bear witness then for me, ye who have seen the places, to those who have not been there. For above Ascalon and Gaza, up to the very end of the river Jordan, there is a country wide and fruitful—or rather there was, for it is not now. This then was as a Paradise. For it is said, "Lot beheld all the plain of Jordan—that it was well watered everywhere, even as the garden of the Lord." This therefore, that was so flourishing, and that rivalled all countries, which for thrivingness exceeded the



Paradise of God, is now more desolate than any wilderness. And there stand trees, indeed, and they bear fruit ; but the fruit is a monument of the wrath of God. For there stand pomegranates, (I speak both of the trees and the fruit,) having a very fine appearance, and to the ignorant holding out great hopes. But if they are taken into the hand, being broken open they display no fruit indeed, but much dust and ashes stored up within. Such also is the whole land. If you find a stone, you will find it full of ashes. And why do I speak of stone, and wood, and earth, where the air and water partake of the calamity ? For as when a body is burnt and consumed, the shape remains, and the outline in the appearance of the fire, and the bulk, and the proportion, but the power is no more ; so truly there you may see earth, which yet has nothing of earth about it, but all ashes ; trees and fruit, which have nothing of trees and fruit about them ; air and water, which have nothing of air or of water about them ; for even those are turned to ashes. And yet how could air ever have been burnt, or water, whilst it remained water ? For wood and stone indeed it is possible to burn, but air and water it is altogether impossible. Impossible to us, but possible to Him Who did all these things. Therefore the air is nothing else than a furnace ; the water is a furnace. All things are unfruitful, all unproductive. They are all images of wrath that has gone before, and proofs of that which is to come.

Are these too but threatening words? Are these but the sound of words? For to me indeed the former things were not incredible, but things not seen were equally credible with things that were seen. But even to the unbeliever these are sufficient to produce faith. If any one disbelieves hell, let him consider Sodom, let him reflect upon Gomorrah, the vengeance that has been inflicted and which yet remains. This is a proof of the eternity of punishment. Are these things grievous? And is it not grievous when you say that there is no hell, and that God has merely threatened it? when you slack the hands of the people? It is thou who disbelievest that compellest me to say these things. If thou believest the words of Christ, I should not be compelled to bring forward facts to induce belief. But since you have evaded them, you shall be persuaded henceforth, whether willing or unwilling. For what have you to say concerning Sodom? Would you wish also to know the cause for which these things were then done? It was one sin, a grievous and accursed one certainly, yet but one. Then He Who for one sin poured forth so much anger, and neither regarded the supplication of Abraham, nor yet Lot who dwelt among them, will He spare when there are now so many sins? These things truly are ridiculous, trifling, delusion, and diabolical deceit.

Do you wish that I should bring forward another? You have certainly heard of Pharaoh, king of the

Egyptians, you know therefore the punishment which he suffered, and how even with his whole host, chariots, and horses, and all, he was engulfed in the Erythrean sea. Would you hear also other examples? for he perhaps was an impious man, or rather, not perhaps, but *certainly* he was an impious man. Would you see those also punished, who were of the number of believers, and who held fast to God, but were not of upright life? Hear Paul saying, "neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us murmur, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents." And if fornication, and if murmuring had such power, what will not be the effect of our sins?

And if he does not now exact punishment, do not wonder. For they knew not of a hell, therefore they were visited with punishments, following close at their heels. But thou, whatever sins thou commit, though thou shouldest escape present punishment, wilt suffer for it there. Did He punish so severely those who were nearly in the state of children, and who had not sinned so greatly, and will He spare us? It would not be reasonable. For if we commit the same sins with them, we shall deserve a greater punishment. Wherefore? Because we have enjoyed more grace. But when our sins are more numerous, and more heinous than theirs, what pun-

ishment shall we not undergo? They—and let no one think I say it as admiring them, or excusing them; God forbid: for when God punishes, he who passes a contrary sentence, does it at the suggestion of the devil, I say this therefore, not praising them nor excusing them, but shewing our wickedness—they therefore, although they murmured, were, however, going through a wilderness; but we murmured though we have a country, and are in our own houses. And although they committed fornication, yet it was just after they came out of the evils of Egypt, and had hardly heard of such a law. But we do it, having previously received from our forefathers the doctrine of salvation, so that we are deserving of greater punishment.

Would you hear also of other things? what were their sufferings in Palestine, famines, pestilences, captivities under the Babylonians, and under the Assyrians, and their miseries from the Macedonians, and those under Adrian and Vespasian? I have something that I wish, beloved, to recite to thee; nay, do not run away! I will rather tell thee another thing before it. There was once a famine, it says, and the king was walking upon the wall; then a woman came to him and uttered these words, “O king, this woman said to me, Let us roast thy son to-day, and eat him—to-morrow mine. And we roasted and ate, and now she does not give me her’s.” What can be more dreadful than this calamity? Again, in another place, the Prophet says,

"The hands of the pitiful women have sodden their own children." The Jews then suffered much punishment, and shall we not much rather suffer?

Would you also hear other calamities of theirs? Read over Josephus, and you will learn that whole tragedy, if perchance we may persuade you from these things that there is a hell. For consider, if they were punished, why are we not punished? or how is it reasonable that we are not now punished, who sin more grievously than they? Is it not manifest that it is because the punishment is kept in store for us? And, if you please, I will tell you in the person of every individual, how they were punished. Cain murdered his brother. A horrible sin indeed, who can deny it? But he suffered punishment, and a heavy one, equivalent to ten thousand deaths; for he would rather have died ten thousand times. For hear him saying, "If thou castest me out from the land, and I shall be hidden from Thy face, then it will happen that every one who findeth me will slay me." Tell me then, do not many even now do the same things that he did? For when thou slayest not thy brother according to the flesh, but thy spiritual brother, dost thou not do the same? For what, though not by the sword? yet by some other means. When being able to relieve his hunger, thou neglectest him. What then? Has no one now envied his brother? has no one plunged him into danger? But here they have not suffered punishment, yet they will suffer it. Then did he who

never heard the written laws, nor the prophets, nor saw great miracles, suffer such great vengeance, and shall he who has done the same things in another way, and was not rendered wise by so many examples, shall he go unpunished? Where, then, is the justice of God, and where His goodness?

Again, a certain one, for having gathered sticks on the Sabbath, was stoned, and yet this was a small commandment, and less weighty than circumcision. He then who gathered sticks on the Sabbath was stoned, but those who have perchance committed ten thousand things contrary to the law go off unpunished! If then there be not a hell, where is His justice, where His impartiality, that respects not persons? And yet He lays to their charge many such things, that they did not observe the Sabbath.

Again, another, the son of Charmi, having stolen a devoted thing, was stoned, with all his family. What then? Has no one from that time committed sacrilege? Saul, again, having spared contrary to the command of God, suffered so great punishment. Has no one from that time spared? Would indeed that it were so! Have we not rather devoured one another, contrary to the command of God? And yet no one has fallen in war. Again, the sons of Eli, because they ate before the incense was offered, suffered the most severe punishment, together with their father. Has no father, then, been neglectful with respect to his children? And are there no wicked sons? But no one has suffered

punishment! Where then will they suffer it, if there be no hell?

Again, numberless other instances one might enumerate. Were not Anania and Sapphira immediately punished, when they kept back part of what they had offered? Has no one then since that time been guilty of these things? How was it then that they did not suffer the same punishment?

Do we then persuade you that there is a hell, or do you need more examples? Therefore we will proceed also to things that are unwritten, such as now take place in life. For it is necessary that this notion should be gathered by us from every quarter, that we may not, by vainly gratifying ourselves, do ourselves harm. Do you not see many visited by calamities, maimed in their bodies, suffering infinite troubles, but others in good repute? For what reason do some suffer punishment for murders, and others not? Hear Paul, saying, "Some men's sins are open beforehand, and some men they follow after." How many murderers have escaped, how many violators of the tombs! But let these things pass. How many do you not see visited with the severest punishment! Some have been delivered to a long disease, others, to continual tortures, and others to numberless other ills. When therefore you see one who has been guilty of the same things as they, or even much worse, and yet not suffering punishment, will you not confess, even against your will, that there is a hell? Reckon those here who

before you have been severely punished, consider that God is no respecter of persons, and that though you have done numberless wickednesses, you have suffered no such thing, and you will have the notion, of hell. For God has so implanted that notion within us, that no one can ever be ignorant of it. For poets, and philosophers, and fabulists, and, in short, all men, have philosophized concerning the retribution that is there, and have said that the greater number are punished in Hades. And if these things are fables, yet what we have received are not so.

I say not these things as wishing to terrify you, nor to lay a burden on your souls; but to make them wise, and render them easier. I could wish also myself that there were no punishment, yes, myself, most of all men. And why so? Because whilst each of you fears for his own soul, I shall have to answer for this office in which I preside over you. So that most of all it is impossible for me to escape. But it cannot be that there is not punishment and a hell. What can I do? Again, they repeat their doubts, and say, Where then is the mercy of God? Everywhere! But on this subject I will rather discourse at some other season, that we may not confuse this discourse concerning hell. In the mean time, let not that slip, which we have gained from what has been said. For it is no small advantage to be persuaded concerning hell. For the recollection of such discourses, like some bitter medicine, will be able to clear off every vice,



if it be constantly settled in our mind. Let us therefore use it, that having thence a pure heart, we may so be thought worthy to see those things "which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man." Which God grant that we may obtain by the grace and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, with Whom, &c.

S. Chrysostom, on 1 Thess. Hom. viii.

## **Second Saturday.**

### **THE GOLD AND THE CLAY.**

**S. GREGORY THE GREAT.**

By the term 'gold' in Holy Scripture is understood sometimes the brightness of Divinity, sometimes the splendour of the heavenly city, sometimes charity, sometimes the brightness of secular glory, sometimes the beauty of sanctity. For by the name 'gold' is designated the very inmost brightness of Divinity, as the appearance of the Bridegroom is described in the Song of Songs: "His head is the most fine gold." For because God is the Head of Christ, but in metals nothing is brighter than gold, the head of the Bridegroom is said to be gold, because His Humanity rules over us from the bright-

ness of His Divinity. Again, by the name 'gold' is understood the splendour of the heavenly city, as John bears witness that he saw it, saying, "The city itself was of pure gold, like unto clear glass." For the gold of which that city consists is said to be like glass, in order that by the gold it may be described as being bright, and by the glass as being clear. Again, by the name 'gold' charity is suggested, as "the Angel," whom the same John beheld talking with him, he saw girt at the paps with a golden girdle. Doubtless because when the breasts of the citizens of heaven are no longer subject to the fear of punishment, and are not separated by any rent the one from the other, they bind themselves together by charity alone. But to "have a golden girdle about the paps," is to restrain all the movements of our changeful thoughts by the bands of love alone. Again, by the name of 'gold' is expressed the brightness of secular glory, as is said by the Prophet, "Babylon is a golden cup." For what is designated by the name of Babylon, but the glory of this world? And this 'cup' is said to be 'golden,' because, while it shews the beauty of temporal things, it so intoxicates foolish minds with its concupiscence, that they desire temporal display, and despise invisible beauties. For in this golden cup Eve was the first who was made drunken of her own accord, of whom the history of truth says, that when she desired the forbidden tree, she saw that it was beautiful to the sight, and delightful to the

look, and ate thereof. Babylon is therefore a golden cup; because, while it displays a look of outward beauty, it steals away the feelings of inward rectitude. Again, by the name of 'gold,' is understood the splendour of sanctity, as Jeremiah deplores the change of the Jewish people from the splendour of righteousness to the gloom of wickedness, saying, "How is the gold become dim, the finest colour is changed?" For as we said before, gold is dimmed, when the beauty of righteousness is forsaken, as the darkness of iniquity succeeds. The finest colour is changed, when the splendour of innocence is turned into the foulness of sin.

By the name also of 'clay' is designated in Holy Scripture sometimes the multiplicity of earthly goods, sometimes wicked teaching which savours of filth, sometimes the allurements of carnal desire. For by 'clay' is typified the multiplicity of earthly goods, as is said by the Prophet Habukkuk, "Woe to him that multiplieth those things which are not his; how long doth he heap against himself the thick clay?" For he weighs himself down with thick clay, who, multiplying earthly goods by avarice, confines himself with the oppression of his sin. Again, by the name of 'clay' is designated teaching which savours of faith, as is said to the Lord by the same Prophet, "Thou madest a way in the sea for Thy horses, in the clay of many waters." As if he were saying, Thou hast opened a way for Thy preacher amid the doctrines of this world, which

savour of filthy and earthly things. By 'clay' is designated also the desire of filthy pleasure, as the Psalmist says in entreaty, "Take me out of the clay, that I stick not." For to stick in the clay is to be polluted with the filthy desires of carnal concupiscence.

In this place, therefore, 'gold' is taken for the brightness of sanctity ; but nothing hinders our understanding by 'clay,' either covetousness in earthly things, or the infection of wicked doctrines, or the filth of carnal pleasures. For because this Leviathan subjects at that time to himself many, who seemed within Holy Church to be resplendent with the brightness of righteousness, either by the desire of earthly things, or by the infection of erroneous doctrine, or by carnal pleasures, he doubtless strews the gold under him like clay. For to strew gold as clay, is to trample down in some persons purity of life by unlawful desires ; so that even they may follow his filthy footsteps, who used before to flash forth against him with the splendour of their virtues. The ancient enemy then deceives some at that time under a show of sanctity, but intercepts others by the foul sins of a carnal life. But he will then, openly attack in these ways, but now he rules secretly in the hearts of many, as the Apostle Paul says, "That he may be revealed in his time ; for the mystery of iniquity doth already work." He therefore even now throws gold under him as clay, as often as he overthrows the chastity of the faithful

through the sins of the flesh. He tramples on gold as clay, as often as he distracts the understanding of the continent by unclean desires. And this he performs the more vehemently at that time, the more unrestrainedly he perpetrates all that he desires, as given up to his own abandoned liberty.

And it may perhaps disturb some one, why the merciful Lord permits those things so to happen, that this Leviathan either now, by crafty suggestions, or then, by that accursed man whom he fully possesses, subjects to himself even the rays of the sun, that is, the learned and wise, or strews gold, (that is, holy men refulgent with the brightness of sanctity,) as clay beneath him, by polluting them with sins. But we reply at once, that the gold which could be strewed as clay by his evil persuasions, was never gold before the eyes of God. For they who can at any time be seduced so as never to come back again, seem in the eyes of men to lose the sanctity they possessed; but they never had it in the sight of God. For a man is often involved secretly in many sins, and he seems great in some one virtue. And this virtue itself also becomes weak and fails, because, when it is observed by men, it is doubtless praised, and its praise is eagerly sought after. Whence it comes that even that very virtue is no virtue in the eyes of God, while it conceals that which displeases, puts forward that which pleases Him. What merits then can there possibly be with God, when both sins are concealed, and

good qualities made public? For frequently, as we have said, pride is hidden, and chastity is publicly known; and therefore the chastity which has been long made a show of, is lost towards the end of life, because the concealed pride is sustained unamended even to the end. Another is busy in alms-giving, he distributes his own goods; but he is yet a slave to many acts of injustice, or perhaps employs his tongue in detraction. And it is frequently the case, that he who had been compassionate, is inflamed, at the end of his life, with the stimulants of rapacity and cruelty. And it is the effect of a most righteous judgment, that he loses before men even that by which he pleased men, who was never careful to amend that by which he was displeasing to God. Another studies patience; but while he does not avoid envying others, and keeping malice in his heart, he at last becomes impatient, who for a long while grieved in secret. These, therefore, are in some measure 'gold,' and in some measure 'clay.' And this 'gold' is strewed as 'clay,' when even the virtue, which had shone brightly before men, is scattered by the force of secret sins. But we think it worth while to consider more accurately the excellence of the heavenly dispensation in these cases.

For Almighty God often tolerates the secret sins of some persons, in order that He may so make use of their known virtues as to promote the interests of His own Elect. For some persons do not entirely forsake the world, and lay hold on the narrow way,

not so as to persevere. But yet by their example they inflame those who are about to persevere, to seek the narrow way. Whence it frequently happens that this good life which they seem to live, they live not for themselves, but rather for the Elect alone, when, though not about to persevere themselves, they excite others who will persevere, to zeal in holy living. But we often behold some persons enter on a way, and hasten to the proposed spot; and others follow them, because they see them on the way, and they go on together to the same place. But it frequently happens, that when any difficulty assails them, those who were going before return back, and that those who were following reach the appointed spot. So doubtless are those who lay hold on the way of holiness, though not about to persevere. For they enter on the way of virtue, though not about to reach its end, for the very purpose of shewing to those who are about to reach it, the way in which they should walk. And even the fall of these promotes, with no slight benefit, the advancement of the Elect. Because, while they behold their fall, they tremble for their own state, and the ruin which condemns those, humbles these. For they learn to trust in the protection of heavenly assistance, when they see that many have fallen from their own strength. When therefore the reprobate seem to be acting rightly, they are pointing out, as it were, a level road for the Elect, who are following them; but when they fall and lapse into

wickedness, they shew, as it were, to the Elect, who are journeying after them, the pitfall of pride to be guarded against. Let this Leviathan, then, go his way, and 'put beneath himself the rays of the sun,' and 'cast under him the gold like clay.' Almighty God knows how to use aright the sin of the reprobate for the comfort of His own Elect, when they who are about to reach Him, both advance towards Him by their own merits, and are frequently corrected in their proud thoughts by the lapses of others.

S. Gregory the Great. *Morals of the Book of Job,*  
Book xxxiv.

### Third Sunday in Advent.

S. JOHN BAPTIST AND ELIAS.  
S. AUGUSTINE.

YE have many times heard, holy brethren, and ye know right well, that John the Baptist, in proportion to his superiority above those born of women, and to his humility in acknowledging the Lord, was counted worthy to be the friend of the Bridegroom; one zealous for the Bridegroom, not for himself; not seeking his own honour, but that of his Judge, Whom, as a herald, he preceded. Wherefore, to the Prophets who went before, it was given to fore-



tell future events concerning Christ ; but to John, to point Christ out with the finger. For like as Christ was unknown of those who believed not the Prophets before He came, so of them was He unknown even when He was actually come. For He came at the first in humble guise, and concealed, the more concealed in proportion as He was more humble ; and the people, through their pride, despising the humility of God, crucified their Saviour, and made of Him their condemning Judge.

But will not He, Who, at first, came concealed, because humble, come the next time manifestly, because exalted ? You have just heard in the Psalm, "God shall come manifestly ; our God, and shall not keep silence." He kept silence that He might be judged, He will not keep silence when He begins to judge. It would not have been said, "He shall come manifestly !" unless at first He had come concealed ; nor "He shall not keep silence," had he not at first kept silence. How did He keep silence ? Ask Isaiah. "He was brought as a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before his shearers was dumb, so He opened not His mouth." But, "He shall come manifestly, and shall not keep silence." How "manifestly ?" "A fire shall go before Him, and round about Him a mighty tempest." That tempest is to carry wholly away the chaff from the floor which is now in threshing ; that fire to consume what the tempest carries off. Now, however, He is silent ; silent in judgment, but not in precept.

For, if Christ is silent, what mean these Gospels? what the voices of the Apostles? the canticles of the Psalms? the lofty utterances of the Prophets? Truly, in all these Christ is not silent. Howbeit He is silent for the present, in not taking vengeance; not, in not warning. But He will come in surpassing brightness to take vengeance, and will be seen of all, even of those who believe not in Him. But now, forasmuch as, although present, He was concealed, it behoved Him to be despised. For unless he had been despised, He would not have been crucified: if not crucified, He would not have shed His Blood, the price with which He redeemed us. But in order that He might give a price for us, He was crucified; that He might be crucified, He was despised; that He might be despised, He appeared in humble guise.

Yet forasmuch as He appeared, so to speak, in the night, in a mortal body, He lighted for Himself a lamp by which He might be seen. That lamp was John, of whom ye have already heard many things; and the portion of the Gospel which we are now reading contains the words of John, first, which is the chief point, confessing that he was not the Christ. So great was John's excellency, that he might have been believed to be the Christ. And herein did he give proof of his humility, that he said he was not, when he might have had it believed that he was. Accordingly, "This is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent Priests and Levites to

him from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou?" They would not have sent, unless they had been moved by the excellency of his authority in taking upon him to baptize. "And he confessed, and denied not." Confessed what? "And he confessed, I am not the Christ." "And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias?" For they knew that Elias was to be the forerunner of Christ. For no Jew was ignorant of the name of Christ. They did not think Jesus to be the Christ, but they were far from thinking that the Christ would not come at all. It was even while they were hoping for His coming, that they stumbled as they did at Him already come, stumbled, as at a low mean stone. For that stone, already indeed cut out of the mountain without hands, (as the Prophet Daniel says that he saw a stone cut out of a mountain without hands,) was still small. But what follows? "And that stone," saith he, "grew, and became a great mountain, and filled the whole face of the earth." See, then, beloved, what I mean. Christ, as seen by the Jews, had already been cut out of the mountain. By the mountain he means the Jewish kingdom. But the Jewish kingdom had not filled the whole face of the earth. The stone was cut out from thence, because from thence the Lord was born in His coming among men. And why "without hands?" Because Christ was born of a Virgin, without the act of man. Well, that stone cut out without hands, was already before the eyes of the

Jews. But it was low and mean ; and with good reason ; for it had not yet grown and filled the world. This He makes good in His kingdom, which is the Church, with which He hath filled the whole face of the earth. It was as not yet grown that they stumbled at Him, as at a stone ; and that was fulfilled in them which is written, "He who shall fall upon that stone shall be shattered, and on whomsoever that stone shall fall it shall grind them to powder." At first they fell upon Him, mean and lowly ; He shall one day come upon them, highly exalted ; but that He may, when He shall so come, grind them to powder, He first in His lowly estate shattered them. They stumbled at Him and were shattered ; not ground to powder, but shattered : He shall come highly exalted, and grind them to powder.

Howbeit, some allowance may be made for the Jews, that they stumbled at the stone which was not yet grown. What sort of men must those be, who have stumbled even at the mountain ? You know whom I mean. They who deny the Church diffused throughout the whole world, stumble not at the lowly stone, but at the mountain itself ; for such the stone became as it grew. The blind Jews did not see the lowly stone ; how great the blindness not to see the mountain !

So then, they saw Him in His lowly estate, and did not recognize Him. He was shewn to them by a lamp. For at the first, he, than whom no greater

had arisen among those born of women, said, "I am not the Christ." He was asked, "Art thou Elias?" He answered, "I am not." For Christ doth send Elias before His face. And he said, "I am not;" thus furnishing matter for question; since it is to be feared that persons, not sufficiently comprehending his meaning, will imagine a contradiction between John's words and the words of Christ. For in a certain place, when the Lord Jesus Christ in the Gospel had been saying certain things of Himself, the disciples answered Him, "How then say the Scribes," that is, those who are skilled in the Law, "that Elias must first come?" The Lord replied, "Elias is already come, and they have done unto him what they listed, and if ye are minded to know it, John the Baptist is he." The Lord Jesus Christ said, "Elias is already come, and he is John the Baptist." But when John was asked, he confessed that he was not Elias, just as he confessed that he was not the Christ. And of course as it was a true confession that he was not the Christ, so was it a true confession that he was not Elias. How then shall we pair the saying of the herald with that of the Judge? We cannot suppose for a moment that the herald speaks a falsehood, for he speaks that which he hears from the Judge. Wherefore then doth he say, "I am not Elias," and the Lord, "He is Elias?" Because the Lord Jesus Christ was pleased in him to prefigure His future coming, and to speak with this meaning, that John was *in the*

*spirit* of Elias, and what John was to the First Advent, that will Elias be to the Second Advent. As there are two Advents of the Judge, so there are two heralds; the Judge, indeed, one and the same, but the heralds two, not two judges. For it behoved the Judge, in the first instance, to come to undergo judgment. He sent before Him His first herald. He called him Elias, because, at the Second Advent, Elias will be what John was at the first.

For observe, beloved, how true that is which I am saying. When John was conceived, or rather, when he was born, the Holy Ghost prophesied of him, "He shall go before the Highest, in the spirit and power of Elias." Not then actually Elias, but, "in the spirit and power of Elias." What is this; "In the spirit and power of Elias?" In the same Holy Spirit, in Elias's stead. Wherefore in Elias's stead? Because, what Elias will be for the second, that was John for the first Advent. John's answer then, above alluded to, was right, taken in its literal and proper sense. For the Lord's answer was *figurative*, "Elias, the same is John;" John's, as I have said, *literal*, "I am not Elias." If thou regard the figure of forerunning, John is Elias; for what the one was to the first Advent, that the other will be to the second. If thou ask for the person in the strict and literal sense, John was John, Elias Elias.

The Lord therefore, in respect of prefiguration, said rightly, "This is Elias;" and John rightly, in respect of the proper and literal sense, "I am not

Elias." Neither John spake false, nor the Lord false ; neither the herald false, nor the Judge false ; provided only thou understand. But who shall understand ? He who imitateth the lowliness of the herald, and acknowledgeth the loftiness of the Judge. For nothing could be more lowly than the herald. My brethren, in nothing had John so great merit as in this humility, in that when (so extraordinary were his grace and excellency) he might have deceived men, and have been thought to be the Christ, and have been held in place of the Christ, yet he confessed openly and said, "I am not the Christ." "Art thou Elias?" Here if he had said, "I am Elias," why then it would have been Christ coming in His second Advent to judge, not in His first to be judged. As if implying 'Elias also is yet to come,' "I," saith he, "am not Elias." But mark the Lowly One, before Whom John came, that ye may not face the Lofty One, before Whom Elias is to come. For the Lord also hath thus completed the saying : "John the Baptist is even he which is to come." In that same person came John figuratively, wherein Elias is to come literally. Then Elias will be in his own proper person ; Elias now, in similitude he was John ; at present John, while in his own proper person he is John, is, in similitude, Elias. The two heralds have given each to other their similitudes, and kept their own proper persons, whereas the Judge is one Lord, whether this herald go before Him or that.

"And they asked him, What then? art thou Elias? And he said, No. And they said unto him, Art thou a Prophet? And he answered, No. They said therefore unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us? What sayest thou of thyself? He saith, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness." They are Isaiah's words. This prophecy was fulfilled in John, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness." Crying what? "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight the paths of our God." Would not you have thought that a herald's cry should be, 'Get you aloof, make way?' Yes, truly a herald cries, 'Get you aloof;' John cries, 'Come.' A herald makes men stand back from the judge; John calls men to the Judge. Nay rather, John calls them to One that is Lowly, that He may not, as the Judge, be felt how Lofty He is. "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, as saith the Prophet Isaiah." He said not, I am John, I am Elias, I am a Prophet. But what said he? This is what I am called, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way for the Lord." I am Prophecy itself.

S. Augustine, on S. John's Gospel. Hom. iv.



**Third Monday.****THE PENITENT FORGIVEN.****TERTULLIAN.**

So far, O Lord Christ, may it happen unto Thy servants to speak, and to hear concerning the rule of repentance, as it behoveth not the hearers to sin ; or let them henceforth know nothing of repentance, nothing need it. I am loth to subjoin any mention of the second, yea, and the last hope, lest in treating of a benefit of repentance yet in reserve, I seem to show that there is yet room for sinning. Far be it from any one so to understand me, as though because a door is still open to repentance, it is therefore open to sin, and as though the abundance of Divine mercy gave a licence to human recklessness. Let no one therefore be the less, because God is the more, good ; sinning as oft as he is forgiven. Otherwise he shall find an end of escaping, when he hath not found an end of sinning. We have escaped once ; suffice it to have exposed ourselves thus far to damages, though we think that we shall again escape. Men for the most part when delivered from shipwreck, renounce thenceforward both the ship and the sea, and by remembering the danger, honour the good

gift of God, that is, their own preservation. I commend their fear, I love their modesty ; they would not a second time be a burden on the Divine mercy ; they are afraid of seeming to tread under foot that which they have already obtained, they shun with assuredly a righteous care to make trial a second time of that which they have once learned to fear. The end therefore of their venturousness is the proof of their fear : but fear in man is honour unto God. But yet that most stubborn adversary never suffereth his malice to rest, but then rageth the most when he perceiveth that man is wholly set free ; then kindleth the most when he is being quenched. Grieve and wail he needs must, when forgiveness of sins hath been granted ; because so many of the works of death in man are destroyed, and so many records of his former condemnation effaced. He grieveth because he that was a sinner, but now a servant of Christ, shall judge him and his angels. Wherefore he watcheth, he attacketh, he besetteth him, if by any means he may strike his eyes by carnal lust, or ensnare his mind by worldly allurements, or overthrow his faith by fear of earthly power, or turn him aside from the true way by perverse traditions. He is not wanting in offences, nor in temptations. Wherefore God, seeing beforehand these his passions, although the door of pardon be shut, and the bar of Baptism interposed, hath yet suffered some opening to remain. He hath placed in the porch a second repentance, which may "open unto"

them that "knock," but now for once, only, because now for the second time, and never again, because at the last time in vain. And is not even this once enough? Thou hast what thou didst not now deserve, for thou hast lost that which thou didst receive. If the kindness of God granteth thee wherewith thou mayest restore that which thou hadst lost, be thankful even for the renewal, how much more for the enlargement, of the good gift: for to restore is greater than to give, since it is more grievous to lose than never to have received at all. But the mind is not to be forthwith cut down, and overwhelmed with despair, if any one become a debtor for a second repentance. Let him indeed be loth to sin again: but let him not be loth to peril himself again, but not to be again delivered. Let none be ashamed. If the sickness be renewed, the medicine must be renewed. Thou wilt shew thyself thankful to the Lord, if thou refusest not that which the Lord offereth thee. Thou hast offended, but thou mayest yet be reconciled. Thou hast One to Whom thou mayest make satisfaction, and Him willing to be satisfied.

If thou doubttest this, consider "what the Spirit saith unto the Churches." To the Ephesians he imputeth that they had "left their first love:" those of Thyatira He reproacheth with "fornication," and the "eating of things sacrificed to idols:" the Sardians He accuseth of "works not perfect:" those of Pergamos He reproveth as teachers of perverse doc-

trines : those of Laodicea He upbrideth as trusting in riches : and yet He admonisheth all these to "repent;" and that even with threatenings. But He would not threaten the impenitent, if he would not pardon the penitent. This might be doubtful if He had not in other places also shown forth this abundance of His mercy. Saith He not, "he that falleth shall arise, and he that turneth away shall return?" It is He verily, it is He that "will have mercy rather than sacrifice." The heavens rejoice, and the Angels that are therein, at the repentance of man. Ho! sinner be of good cheer: thou seest where there is joy at thy return. What mean those lessons given us in the parables of the Lord? that a woman lost a piece of money, and sought it again, and found it, and called her friends to rejoice with her; is it not an emblem of the restored sinner? A shepherd also hath one sheep that wandereth, but the whole flock is not more precious than that one; that one is sought for; that one is desired in the stead of all, and at last is found and carried back on the shoulders of the Shepherd Himself, for it had toiled much in wandering. Nor will I pass by in silence that most gentle Father Who calleth back His prodigal son, and when, after "being in want" he repenteth, willingly receiveth him, "killeth the fatted calf," adorneth His rejoicing with a feast. And wherefore not? For He had found the son whom He had lost, and had felt that he whom He had gained was the more precious. Whom are we to

understand by this Father? Verily it is God. None so much a Father; none so fatherly in love.

Thee therefore His own son, though thou hast wasted that which thou hast received from Him, though thou hast returned naked, yet because thou hast returned, He will receive, and will rejoice more for thy return than for the soberness of another. But this only, if thou repentest from thine heart; if thou comparest thy "hunger" with the fulness of thy "Father's hired servants;" if thou leavest the "swine," that filthy herd; if thou seekest again thy Father, though He be offended, saying, "Father I have sinned, and am no more worthy to be called Thine." Confession of sins lighteneth their burden, as much as the dissembling of them increaseth it, for confession savoureth of making amends, dissembling, of stubbornness. The more straightened then the work of this second, and only remaining repentance, the more laborious its proof, so that it may not be only borne upon the conscience within, but may be also exhibited by some outward act. This act which is better and more commonly expressed by a Greek word (*ἐξομολόγησις*), is confession, whereby we acknowledge our sin to the Lord, not because He knoweth it not, but inasmuch as by confession satisfaction is ordered, from confession repentance springeth; by repentance God is appeased. Wherefore confession is a discipline for the abasement and humiliation of man, enjoining such conversation as inviteth mercy; it directeth also even in the matter

of dress and food, to lie in sackcloth and ashes, to hide his body in filthy garments, to cast down his spirit with mourning, to exchange for severe treatment the sins which he hath committed ; for the rest to use simple things for meat and drink, to wit, not for the belly's, but the soul's sake ; for the most part also to cherish prayer by fasts, to groan, to weep, and to moan day and night unto the Lord his God ; to throw himself upon the ground before the presbyters, and to fall on his knees before the beloved of God, to enjoin all the brethren to bear the message of his prayer for mercy.

All these things doth confession, that it may command repentance ; that by fearing danger it may honour God ; that by "judging" of itself the sinner, it may act in the stead of God's wrath, and that by means of temporal affliction, it may—I will not say frustrate, but—discharge the eternal penalties. When therefore it casteth down a man, it rather raiseth him up ; when it maketh him filthy, it rendereth him the more clean ; when it accuseth, it excuseth ; when it condemneth, it absolveth. In the measure in which thou sparest not thyself, in the same, be assured, will God spare thee.

Tertullian on Repentance, xi. 7.

### Third Tuesday.

EVIL THOUGHTS. S. GREGORY THE  
GREAT.

ALL that either seek forbidden things, or that desire to appear somewhat in this world, are inwardly beset with a countless throng of thoughts, and while they stir up in their own bosom a host of desires, their mind, being laid prostrate, is miserably trodden by the foot of crowded resort. Thus one man has subjected himself to the law of lust, and he paints to his mind's eye representations of impure acts, and when the execution of the deed is not in his power, the thing is the more often done in the inward intent; the consummating of pleasure is sought, and the mind being struck powerless, borne hither and thither, disquieted at once and blinded, looks out eagerly for an opportunity of the foulest fulfilment in practice. That mind then, which is disordered by a rabble riot of thoughts, suffers as it were a kind of crowded population. Another man has submitted his neck to the dominion of anger, and what does he employ himself about in imagination, but quarrels which do not even exist? Such a man is often overlooking those that are before him, contradicting the absent,

giving and receiving insults in imagination, making his reply severer than the insult received, and when there is none there to encounter him, he makes up a quarrel in his own breast with much uproar. He then that is pressed down by an intolerable weight of angry thoughts, has the misfortune of a rabble in his own bosom. Another has delivered himself over to the law of avarice, and, out of conceit with his own possessions, hankers after what belongs to another: it often happens that being unable to obtain what he longs for, he spends the day indeed in idleness, but the night in thought; he is a sluggard in useful work, because he is harassed with unlawful devices: he multiplies his schemes, and stretches his bosom the wider by all the contrivances and expedients of his invention; he is busy to reach the desired objects, and in order to obtain them he casts about for the most secret windings to serve for his occasions, and the moment that he reckons himself to have hit upon any crafty contrivance on an occasion, he is now in high glee, as having obtained possession of his object, and now he is contriving what he may even add further to the thing when gotten, and is considering how it ought to be improved to a better condition; and whereas he is now in possession, and is bringing it to wear a better appearance, he is next considering the snares of those that are envious of him, and pondering what dispute they may fasten upon him, and making out what answer to give, and at the time he has nothing in his hands, the empty-



handed disputant is wearing himself out in defence of the things which he desired. Thus although he has not got a particle of the object desired, yet he has already in his breast the fruit of his desire, in the troublesomeness of the quarrel ; and so he that is overcome by the tumultuous instigations of avarice, has a vast population besetting him. Another one has subjected himself to the empire of pride, and while he lifts himself up against his fellow-creatures, he submits his heart to the vice, to his great misery. He covets the wreaths of elevated honours, he aims to exalt himself by his successes, and all that he desires to be, he represents to himself in the secret thoughts of his own breast. He is already, as it seems, seated on the judgment-seat, already sees the services of his subjects at his command, already shines above others, already brings evil upon one party, or recompenses another for having done this. Already in his own imagination he goes forth into public surrounded by throngs, already marks with what observance he is sustained in his high position ; yet, while fancying this, he is creeping by himself alone. Now he is treading one set under his feet, now he is elevating another ; now he is gratifying his dislikes upon those he treads under foot, now he is receiving applause from the other whom he has elevated. What else is that man doing, who has such a multitude of fanciful imaginations pictured in his heart, save gazing at a dream with waking eyes ? And thus, since he undergoes the misery of

so many combinations of cases, which he pictures to himself, he plainly carries about within him crowds that are engendered of his desires. Another has by this time learnt to eschew forbidden objects; yet he dreads lest he should lack the good things of this world. He is anxious to retain the goods vouchsafed him; he is ashamed to appear inferior among men, and he is full of concern lest he should become either a poor man at home, or an object of contempt in public. He anxiously enquires what may suffice for himself, what the needs of his dependants may require; and that he may sufficiently discharge the rights of a patron towards his dependants, he searches for patrons whom he may himself wait upon; but whilst he is joined to them in a relation of dependence, he is undoubtedly implicated in their concerns, wherein he often consents to forbidden acts, and the wickedness, which he has no mind for, on his own account, he commits, for the sake of other objects which he has not forsaken. For often, while dreading the diminution of his reputation in the world, he gives his approval to those things with his superiors, which in his own secret judgment he has now learnt to condemn. Whilst he anxiously bethinks himself what he owes to his patrons, what to his dependants, what gain he may make for himself, how he may promote his inclinations, he is in a manner overlaid with resort of crowds, as many in number as the demands of the cases whereby he is distracted.

But holy men, on the other hand, because their

hearts are not set upon any thing of this world, are assuredly never subject to the pressure of any tumults in their breast, for they banish all inordinate stirrings of desire from the heart's bed, with the hand of holy deliberation. And because they condemn all transitory things, they do not experience the licentious familiarities of the thoughts springing therefrom. For their desires are fixed upon their eternal country alone, and, loving none of the things of this world, they enjoy a perfect tranquillity of mind ; and hence it is said with justice, " Which built desolate places for themselves." For to " build desolate places," is to banish from the heart's interior the stirrings of earthly desires, and with a single aim at the eternal inheritance to pant in love of inward peace. Had he not banished from himself all the risings of the imaginations of the heart, who said, " One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after ; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord ?" For he had betaken himself from the concourse of earthly desires to no less a solitude than his own self, where he would be the more secure in seeing nought without, in proportion as there was no insufficient object that he loved. For from the tumult of earthly things he had sought a singular and perfect retreat in a quiet mind, wherein he would see God the more clearly, in proportion as he saw Him alone with himself also alone.

S. Gregory the Great. *Morals of the Book of Job.*  
Book iv.

**Third Wednesday.****NO PURIFICATION EXCEPT IN THE  
CHURCH.****S. GREGORY THE GREAT.**

“THE silver hath the beginnings of its veins, and to the gold there is a place, where they fine it.” In silver, the power of speaking, in gold, brightness of life or of wisdom, is used to be denoted. And because heretics are so filled with pride for the brilliancy of their speaking, that they are not based firmly by any authority of the sacred books, (which books are, for speaking, like a kind of veins of silver to us, because from those identical books we derive the spring and source of our speaking,) he recalls them to the pages of sacred authority, that if they have a desire to speak in a true way, they may from that source draw forth what to say. And he saith, “The silver hath the beginning of its veins, and to the gold there is a place, where they fine it.” As if he said in plain words, ‘He that is fitting himself for the words of true preaching, the originals of the cases he must of necessity derive from the sacred page, so as to bring round every thing that he speaks to a foundation of divine authority, and in that, set

firm the edifice of his own speaking.' For, as we before said, oftentimes heretics, whilst they are eager to prop up what is bad of their own, broach things which assuredly are not maintained in the page of the sacred books. And hence the great preacher admonishes his disciple, saying, "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane novelties of speaking;" for whereas heretics long to be extolled as if for excellency of wit, they as it were bring out new things, which are not maintained in the old books of the ancient fathers, and thus it follows, that whilst they desire to appear wise, they scatter seeds of foolishness to their wretched hearers.

And it is well added, "and to the gold there is a place where they fine it." As if he said in plain terms, 'the true wisdom of believers, which has the Church universal for its place, undergoes tribulation by you persecuting her, but from all the dross of sin by the fire of your persecution she is purified.' Whence it is written, "For gold is tried in the fire, and acceptable men in the furnace of adversity." In which passage this too may be appropriately taken for the meaning, that for their foolish suffering heretics might seem to be rebuked. For oftentimes for the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Redeemer, they suffer much, and by those same sufferings they look for themselves to become His martyrs. To which persons it is now said by the voice of the holy man, "and to the gold there is a place, where

they fine it." For according to that which has been already said even before us, he that suffers out of the unity of the Church, punishments he may suffer, but a martyr he cannot be made; for "to the gold there is a place, where they fine it." What then, ye heretics, say ye to these things? Ye are minded to be 'fined' by the afflicting of the flesh, nay even by martyrdom, but the place where you must be 'fined' ye know not. Hear ye what is spoken by the voice of the holy preacher, "To the gold there is a place, where they fine it." So then, seek ye this "place for the fining," this furnace wherein the gold may be fitly purged, find ye out.

There is one Church in which he that may have attained to be fined, may likewise be purified from all the dross of sins. If for the sake of God ye undergo ought of bitterness, if ought of tribulation, being without her pale, ye can only be burnt, ye cannot be purified. Let Jeremiah tell, let him tell in what way the fire of your fining is void of all efficacy. "The fire melteth in vain, for their wickednesses are not done away." See how the fire externally melting at once administers a punishment of hard suffering, and yet does not clear off the sin of misbelief; it both furnishes torments of cruel punishments, and does not cause additions of your merits. Moreover, the fire of this fining which is undergone out of the Catholic Church, how utterly it is void of all efficacy the Apostle Paul instructs us, when he says, "And though I give my body to

be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." For some think wrong things touching God, and others hold what is right about the Creator, but do not maintain unity with their brethren; the one are sundered by erroneousness of faith, and the others by the commission of schism. And hence in the very first part of the Decalogue, the sins of both sides are checked, seeing that it is said by the voice of God, "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." And it is immediately added, "And thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." For whoso imagines what is wrong about God, surely it is evident that he does not 'love God.' But he who, while he entertains right notions about God, is divided from the unity of the Holy Church, it is plain that he does not love his neighbour, whom he refuses to have for his fellow.

Whosoever then is divided from this unity of the Church our mother, either through heresy in entertaining wrong notions concerning God, or by the erroneousness of schism in not loving his neighbour, is bereft of the grace of that charity, concerning which Paul saith what we have before given, "And though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." As if he expressed himself in plain utterance: 'Without the bounds of its place, the fire of fining being applied to me, only affects me with torment, and does not purify me by its cleansing.' This place, all they

that are lovers of holy peace seek with heartiest endeavours ; this, on seeking, they find, this finding, they keep, knowing the remission of sin, as to where, or when, or to what sort it is vouchsafed. For where is it, save in the bosom of our Catholic mother ? When, but before the day of coming departure ? Because, " Behold, now is the accepted time, behold, now is the day of salvation." And, " Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near." To what sort of persons, but to the converted, who, after the imitating of little children, are fashioned by humility as their mistress ? To whom it is said, " Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of heaven." And, " Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of heaven." And therefore, because there are no true martyrs made saving in the Catholic Church, it is rightly said, " To the gold there is a place where they fine it." Because the soul would not be made bright in the radiance of everlasting beauty, except, so to say, it were first burnt here in the workshop of charity.

Moreover, we are to consider that there are some whom Almighty God, by His secret counsel preserving in innocency from their very beginnings, promotes to the topmost heights of virtuous attainments, that, as their age increases, both numerousness of years and loftiness of merits should simultaneously advance in them. But others abandoning



in their outset, He suffers to go with bad habits fermenting by headlong ways. Yet, for the most part, even these He has regard to, and, for the following after Him, He kindles them with the fire of holy love, and the itchings of bad propensities engraved in their hearts, He converts into a fervour of virtue; and they are the more set on fire to the desire of beseeching the pitifulness of God, in proportion as they are the more ashamed at the recollection of their own wickedness; as it often happens that in the conflict of the fight, the soldier, who is placed before the eyes of his leader, basely yields to the enemy's valour, and that whilst he powerlessly turns his back he is struck; yet nevertheless, being ashamed of this very thing that he has done disgracefully before his leader's eyes, from the mere sense of shame he gathers greater force, and afterwards executes deeds of prowess to so high a degree, that he may at once achieve present credit of his valour, and cover past disgrace of weakness. In a like way, these persons are sometimes more actively established in the service of God, by consequence of past weakness; and such persons for the keeping of His commandments both the desire of things future draws on, and the remembrance of things past urges forward; that on the one side, affection to that which is to come should stimulate, and, on the other, shame for that which is past spur on.

S. Gregory the Great. *Morals of the Book of Job,*  
Book xviii.

### Third Thursday.

#### SHALL WE FEAR GOD OR MAN.

S. AUGUSTINE.

THE Divine oracles which have just been read teach us in fearing not to fear, and in not fearing to fear. Ye observed when the Holy Gospel was being read, that our Lord God, before He died for us, would have us to be firm; and this by admonishing us *not* to fear, and withal to fear. For He said, "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul." See where he advised us not to fear. See now where he advised us to fear. "But," saith He, "fear Him Who hath power to destroy both body and soul in hell." Let us fear, therefore, that we may not fear. Fear seems to be allied to cowardice: seems to be the character of the weak, not the strong. But see what saith the Scriptures, "The fear of the Lord is the hope of strength." Let us then fear, that we may not fear; that is, let us fear prudently, that we may not fear vainly.

The Holy Martyrs, on the occasion of whose solemnity this lesson was read out of the Gospel, in fearing, feared not; because, in fearing God, they did not regard men. For what need a man fear

from man? And what is that whereby one man should cause another fear, since both of them are men? One threatens and says, "I will kill thee;" and does not fear, lest after his threat he die before he have fulfilled it. "I will kill thee," he says. Who says it, and to whom? I hear two men, the one threatening, and the other alarmed; of whom the one is powerful and the other weak, yet both are mortal. Why then does he so stretch out himself, he, in honour, a somewhat more inflated power, in body, equal weakness? Let him securely threaten death who does not fear death. But if he fear that whereby he causes fear, let him think of himself, and compare himself with him whom he is threatening. Let him see in him whom he threateneth a likeness of condition, and so together with him let him seek like pity from the Lord. For he is but a man, and he threatens another man; a creature, another creature; only the one puffed up under his Creator's eye, and the other fleeing for refuge to the same Creator.

Let the strict Martyr, then, as he stands a man before another man, say, "I do not fear, because I fear." Thou canst not do what thou art threatening unless He will; but what He threateneth none can hinder Him from doing. And then again, what dost thou threaten, and what canst thou do if thou art permitted? Thy violence extends but to the flesh, the soul is safe from thee. Thou canst not kill what thou dost not see: visible thyself, thou

threatenest that which is visible in me. But we have both an invisible Creator, Whom we ought both to fear; Who, of that which was both visible and invisible, created man. He made him visible out of the earth, and with His breath He breathed into him an invisible Spirit. Therefore the invisible substance, that is, the soul, which was raised from the earth, the earth as it lay, does not fear when thou assaultest the earth. Thou canst strike the habitation, but canst thou strike him who dwells there? When the chain is broken, he escapes who before was bound, and he will now be crowned in secret. Why then dost thou threaten me, who canst do nothing to my soul? Through the desert of that to which thou canst do nothing, will that to which thy power extends rise again. For through the soul's desert will the flesh also rise again, and will be restored to its inhabitant, now no more to fail, but to endure for ever. Behold, (I am using the words of a Martyr,) behold, I say, not even on account of my body do I fear thy threats. My body, indeed, is subject to thy power, but even the hairs of my head are numbered by my Creator. Why should I fear lest I lose my body, who cannot even lose a hair? How shall He not have a care of my body to Whom my meanest things are so well known? This body which may be wounded and slain will for a time be ashes, but it will be for ever immortal. But to whom shall this be? To whom shall the body be restored for life eternal, even though it have been

slain, destroyed, and scattered to the winds? To whom shall it be so restored? To him who has not been afraid to lay down his own life, since he does not fear lest his body should be slain.

For, brethren, the soul is said to be immortal, and immortal it is according to a certain manner of its own; for it is a kind of life which is able to give life to the body by its presence. For by the soul doth the body live. This life cannot die, and therefore is the soul immortal. Why then said I, according to a certain manner of its own? Hear why. Because there is a true immortality, an immortality which is an entire unchangeableness; of which the Apostle saith, speaking of God, "Who only hath immortality, dwelling in that light which no man may approach unto, Whom no man hath seen nor can see, to Whom be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen." If then God only hath immortality, the soul must needs be mortal. See then why it was that I said that the soul is immortal after a certain manner of its own. For in fact it may also die. Understand this, beloved, and there will remain no difficulty. I venture to say, then, that the soul can die, can be slain also.

Yet it is undoubtedly immortal. See, I venture to say, it is at once immortal, and it may be slain; and therefore I said, that there is a kind of immortality, an entire unchangeableness, that is, which God only hath, of Whom it is said, "Who only hath immortality:" for, if the soul cannot be slain, how

did the Lord Himself say, when He would make us fear, "Fear hath power to slay both body and soul in hell?"

Hitherto I have confirmed, not solved, the difficulty. I have proved that the soul can be slain. The Gospel cannot be gainsaid but by the ungodly soul. Lo, something occurs to me here, and comes into my mind to speak. Life cannot be gainsaid, but by a dead soul. The Gospel is life; impiety and infidelity are the death of the soul.

See then it can die, and yet it is immortal. How then is it immortal? Because there is always a sort of life which is never extinguished in it. And how does it die? Not in ceasing to be life, but by losing its life. For the soul is both life to something else, and it has its own proper life. Consider the order of the creatures. The soul is the life of the body; God is the life of the soul.

As the life, that is, the soul, is present with the body, that the body die not; so ought the life of the soul, that is, God, to be with it, that the soul die not. How does the body die? By the soul's leaving it. I say, by the soul's leaving it the body dies; and it lies along, a mere carcase, what was a little before a desirable, now a contemptible, object. There are in it still its several members, the eyes, and ears; but these are but the windows of the house, its inhabitant is gone. They who bewail the dead cry in vain at the windows of the house; there is none within to hear. How many things does the fond affection of

the mourner give utterance to, how many enumerate and call to mind ; and with what a madness of sorrow, so to say, does he speak, as with one who was sensible of what was doing, when he is really speaking with one who is no longer there ? He recounts his good qualities, and the tokens of his goodness towards himself. It was thou that didst give me this, and didst this and that for me ; it was thou who didst thus and thus dearly love me. But if thou wouldest only consider and understand, and restrain the madness of thy grief, he who once loved thee is gone ; in vain does the house receive thy knockings, in which thou canst not find a dweller.

Let us then return to the subject I was speaking of a little while since.

The body is dead. Why ? because its life, that is, the soul, is gone. Again, the body is alive, and the man is impious, unbelieving, hard of belief, incorrigible ; in this case whilst the body is alive, the soul by which the body lives is dead. For the soul is so excellent a thing, that it has power even though dead to give life to the body. So excellent a thing, I say, is the soul, so excellent a creature, that even though dead itself, it has power to quicken the body. For the soul of the impious, unbelieving, unregulated man is dead, and yet by it, though dead, the body lives. And therefore is it in the body ; it sets on the hands to work, and the feet to walk ; it directs the eye to see, it disposes the ears to hear ; it discriminates tastes ; avoids pains ; seeks after

pleasures. All these are tokens of the life of the body; but they are from the presence of the soul.

If I were to ask a body whether it were alive, it would answer me, you see me walking; you see me working; you hear me talking; you perceive that I have certain aims, and aversions; and do you not understand that the body is alive? By these works then of the soul which is placed within, I understand that the body is alive.

I ask the soul also whether it is alive? It also has its proper works by which it manifests its life. The feet walk. I understand by this that the body lives, but by the presence of the soul; I ask now, does the *soul* live? These feet walk, (to speak only of this one movement,) I am questioning both body and soul as touching their life. The feet walk; I understand that the body lives. But whither do they walk? To adultery, it is said. Then is the soul dead. For so hath unerring Scripture said, "The widow who liveth in pleasure is dead." Now since the difference is great between "pleasure" and adultery, how can the soul which is said to be dead in pleasure, live in adultery? It is surely dead. But it is dead even though it be not in this case. I hear a man speaking; the body then lives. For the tongue could not move itself in the mouth, and by its several motions give utterance to articulate sounds, were there not an inhabitant within, and a musician as it were to this instrument, to make use of his tongue. I understand it perfectly.



Thus the body speaks ; the body then lives. But I ask, is the soul alive also ? Lo, the body speaks, and so is alive. But what does it speak ? As I said concerning the feet, they walk, and so the body is alive ; and I then asked, whither do they walk ? that I might understand whether the soul was alive also. So also when I hear a man speak, I understand that the body is alive ; I ask what does he speak, that I may know whether the soul is alive also ? He speaks a lie. If so, then is the soul dead. How do we prove this ? Let us ask the Truth Itself, which saith, "The mouth that lieth slayeth the soul." I ask, why is the soul dead ? I ask, as I did just now, why is the body dead ? Because the soul, its life, was gone. Why is the soul dead ? Because God, its life, hath forsaken it.

After this brief examination, then, know, and hold for certain, that the body is dead without the soul, and that the soul is dead without God. Every man without God hath a dead soul. Thou dost bewail the dead ; bewail the sinner rather ; bewail rather the ungodly man ; bewail the unbeliever. It is written, "The mourning for the dead is seven days ; for a fool and an ungodly man, all the days of his life." What ! are there no bowels of Christian compassion in thee, that thou mournest for a body from which the soul is gone, and mournest not for the soul from which God is departed ? Let the Martyr, remembering this, make answer to him that threatens him, "Why dost thou force me to deny

Christ?" Wouldest thou then force me to deny the truth? And if I will not, what wilt thou do? Thou wilt assault my body, that my soul shall depart from it; but this same soul of mine has its body only for the soul's sake. It is not so foolish or unwise. Thou wouldest wound my body; but wouldest thou that through fear lest thou shouldest wound my body, and my soul should depart from it, I should wound mine own soul, and my God should depart from it? Fear not then, O Martyr, the sword of thy executioner; fear only thine own tongue, lest thou do execution upon thine own self, and slay, not thy body, but thy soul. Fear for thy soul, lest it die in hell-fire.

Therefore said the Lord, "Who hath power to slay both body and soul in hell-fire." How? when the ungodly shall be cast into hell-fire, will his body and his soul burn there? Everlasting punishment will be the death of the body; the absence of God will be the death of the soul. Wouldest thou know what the death of the soul is? Understand the Prophet, who saith, "Let the ungodly be taken away, that he may not see the glory of the Lord." Let the soul then fear its proper death, and not fear the death of its body. Because if it fear its own death, and so live in its God, by not offending and thrusting Him away from him, it will be found worthy to receive its body again at the end; not unto everlasting punishment, as the ungodly, but unto life eternal, as the righteous. By fearing this

death, and losing that life, did the Martyrs, in hope of the promises of God, and in contempt of the threats of persecutors, attain themselves to be crowned with God, and have left to us the celebration of their solemnities.

S. Augustine, on S. Matthew, Sermon. xv.

### Third Friday.

#### VANITY OF HUMAN THINGS.

S. CHRYSOSTOM.

“As it was in the days of Noah, they were marrying and giving in marriage,” so is it even now. It was then predicted long before it took place, and it is now predicted four hundred years or more beforehand: but no one heeds it. It is looked upon as a mere fable, as a matter of derision; no one fears it, no one weeps or beats his breast at the thought of it. The stream of fire is boiling up, the flame is kindled, and we are laughing, taking our pleasure, and sinning without fear. No one even bears in mind that Day. No one considers that present things are passing away, and that they are but temporal, though events are every day crying out, and uttering a fearful voice. The untimely deaths, the dangers that take place in our lives, our own infirmities and diseases, fail to instruct us.

And not only in our own bodies are these changes visible, but in the elements themselves. Every day in our different ages we experience a kind of death, and in every case instability is the characteristic of things we see. Neither winter, nor summer, nor spring, nor autumn, is permanent; all are running, flying, and flowing past. Why should I speak of fading flowers, of dignities, of kings that are to-day, and to-morrow cease to be, of rich men, of magnificent houses, of night and day, of the sun and the moon? for the moon wanes, and the sun is sometimes eclipsed, and often darkened with clouds. Of things visible, in short, is there anything that endures for ever? Nothing! No, not anything in us but the soul, and that we neglect. Of things subject to change we take abundant care, as if they were permanent, but that which is to endure for ever we neglect, as if it were soon to pass away. Some one is enabled to perform mighty actions, but they shall last till to-morrow, and then he perishes; as we see in the instances of those who have had yet greater power, and are now to be seen no more. Life is a dream, and a scene; and as on the stage when the scene is shifted the various pageants disappear, and as dreams flit away when the sunbeams rise, so here when the end comes, whether the universal, or that of each one, all is dissolved and vanishes away. The tree that you have planted remains, and the house that you have built, it too stands on. But the planter and the builder go away and perish. Yet

these things happen without one regarding it, and we live on in luxury and pleasure, and are ever furnishing ourselves with such things, as if we were immortal.

Hear what Solomon says, who knew the present world by actual experience, "I builded me houses, I planted me vineyards, I made me gardens, and orchards, and pools of water. I gathered me also silver and gold. I gat myself men-singers, and women-singers, and flocks and herds." There was no one who lived in greater luxury, or higher glory. There was no one so wise or so powerful, no one who saw all things so succeeding to his heart's desire. What then? He had no enjoyment from all these things. What after all does he say of it himself? "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." Vanity not simply, but superlatively. Let us believe him who knew by experience. Let us believe him, and lay hold on that in which there is no vanity, in which there is truth; and what is based upon a solid rock, where there is no old age, nor decline, but all things bloom and flourish, without decay, or waxing old, or approaching dissolution. Let us, I beseech you, love God with genuine affection, not from fear of hell, but from desire of the Kingdom. For what is comparable to seeing Christ? Surely nothing! What to the enjoyment of those good things? Surely nothing! Well may there be nothing; for "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath

prepared for them that love Him." Let us be anxious to obtain those things, and let us despise all these. Are we not continually complaining that human life is nothing? Why art thou solicitous for what is nothing? Why dost thou sustain such toils for what is nothing? Thou seest splendid houses, does the sight of them delude thee? Look up to heaven: raise thy view from pillars of stone to that beautiful fabric, compared with which the others are as the works of ants and pismires. Learn philosophy from that spectacle, ascend to heavenly things, and look thence upon our splendid buildings, and see that they are nothing, the mere toys of little children. Seest thou not how much finer, how much lighter, how much purer, how much more translucent, is the air the higher thou ascendest? There have they that do alms their mansions and their tabernacles. These that are here are dissolved at the resurrection, or rather before the resurrection, destroyed by the stroke of time. Nay often in their most flourishing state and period, an earthquake overthrows, or fire entirely ruins them. For not only the bodies of men, but their very buildings are liable to untimely deaths. Nay, sometimes things, decayed by time, stand firm under the shock of an earthquake, whilst glittering edifices, firmly fixed, and newly constructed, are struck but by lightning, and perish. And this, I believe, is the interposition of God, that we may not take pride in our buildings.

Would you again have another ground for cheerfulness? Go to the public buildings, in which you share equally with others. For the most magnificent private houses, after all, are less splendid than the public edifices. There you may remain as long as you please. They belong to you as much as to others, since they are common to you with others; they are common and not private. But those, you say, delight you not. They delight you not, partly because you are familiar with them, and partly from your covetousness. So the pleasantness is not in the beauty, but in the appropriating! So the pleasure is in greediness, and in the wish to make every man's goods your own! How long are we to be nailed to these things? How long are we to be fastened to the earth, and grovel, like worms, in the dirt? God hath given us a body of earth, that we might carry it with us up to heaven, not that we should draw our soul down with it to earth. Earthy it is, but if we please, it may be heavenly. See how highly God has honoured us, in committing to us so excellent a frame. I made heaven and earth, He says, and to you I give the power of creation. Make your earth heaven. For it is in thy power. "I am He that maketh and transformeth all things," saith God of Himself. And He hath given to men a similar power; as a painter, being an affectionate father, teaches his own art to his son. I formed thy body beautiful, He says, but I give thee the power of forming something better. Make thy soul beauti-

ful. I said, "Let the earth bring forth grass, and every fruitful tree." Do thou also say, Let this earth bring forth its proper fruit, and what thou wilt to produce will be produced. I make the summer and the cloud. I create the lightning and the wind. I formed the dragon, that is the devil, to make sport with him. Nor have I grudged thee the like power. Thou, if thou wilt, canst sport with him, and bind him as thou wouldest a sparrow. I make the sun to rise upon the evil and the good : do thou imitate Me, by imparting of that is thine to the good and the evil. When mocked, I bear with it, and do good to those who mock Me : do thou imitate Me, as thou canst. I do good, not to be requited, do thou imitate Me, and do good, not to be repaid. I have lighted luminaries in the heavens. Do thou light others brighter than these, for thou canst, by enlightening those that are in error. For to know Me is a greater benefit than to behold the sun. Thou canst not create a man, but thou canst make him just and acceptable to God. I formed his substance, do thou beautify his will. See how I love thee, and have given thee the power in the greater things.

Beloved, see how we are honoured ! Yet some are so unreasonable and so ungrateful as to say, 'Why are we endowed with free will ?' But how in all the particulars which we have mentioned could we have imitated God, if there had been no free will ? I rule Angels, He says, and so dost thou, through Him Who is the First-Fruits. I sit on a



royal throne, and thou art seated with Me, in Him Who is the First-Fruits. As it is said, "He hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Through Him Who is the First-Fruits, Cherebim and Seraphim adore thee, with all the heavenly host, principalities and powers, thrones and dominions. Disparage not thy body, to which such high honours appertain, that the embodied powers tremble at it.

But what shall I say? It is not in this way only that I have shewn My love to thee, but by what I have suffered. For thee I was spit upon, I was scourged. I emptied Myself of glory, I left My Father and came to thee who dost hate Me, and turn from Me, and art loth to hear My Name. I pursued thee, I ran after thee, that I might overtake thee. I united and joined thee to Myself, 'eat Me, drink Me,' I said. Above I hold thee, and below I embrace thee. Is it not enough for thee that I have thy First-Fruits above? Doth not this satisfy thy affection? I descended below; I not only am mingled with thee, I am entwined in thee. I am masticated, broken into minute particles, that the interspersed, and commixture, and union may be more complete. Things united remain yet in their own limits, but I am interwoven with thee. I would have no more any division between us. I will that we be both one.

Therefore knowing these things, and remembering His abundant care for us, let us do all things which

may prove us not unworthy of His great gift, which God grant that we may all obtain through the grace and loving-kindness of Christ Jesus our Lord, with Whom, &c.

S. Chrysostom on 1 Timothy, Hom. xv.

### Third Saturday.

#### VIRTUES SOMETIMES AKIN TO VICES. S. CHRYSOSTOM.

ONE must look narrowly into virtues and vices, to learn what the one is, and what the other; narrowly, because these virtues have their corresponding vices hard by them; mere forwardness passing itself off for boldness, mere cowardice for gentleness: and need being to scan them, lest any person possessing the vice, should seem to have the virtue. What then is gentleness, and what mere cowardice? When others are wronged, and we do not take their part, but hold our peace, this is cowardice; when we are the persons ill-treated, and we bear it, this is gentleness. What is boldness? Again the same, when others are the persons for whom we contend. What forwardness? When it is in our own cause that we are willing to fight. So that magnanimity and boldness go together, as also mere forwardness and mere cowardice. For he that does not resent on his own

behalf, will hardly but resent on behalf of others : and he that does not stand up for his own cause, will hardly fail to stand up for others. For when our habitual disposition is pure from passion, it admits virtue also. Just as a body when free from fever admits strength, so the soul, unless it be corrupted by the passions, admits strength. It betokens great strength, this gentleness : it needs a generous and a gallant soul, and one of exceeding loftiness, this gentleness. Or, think you, is it a small thing to suffer ill, and not be exasperated ? Indeed one would not err if in speaking of the disposition to stand up for our neighbours, one should call it the spirit of manly courage. For he that has had the strength to be able to overcome so strong a passion as this of selfishness, will have the strength to dare the attack on another. For instance, these are two passions, cowardice and anger : if thou have overcome anger, it is very plain that thou overcomest cowardice also : but thou gettest the mastery over anger by being gentle ; therefore do so with cowardice also, and thou wilt be manly. Again, if thou hast not got the better of anger, thou art become forward and pugnacious ; but not having got the better of this, neither canst thou get the better of fear, consequently, thou wilt be a coward too : and the case is the same as with the body ; if it be weak, it is quickly overcome, both by cold and heat, for such is the ill temperament ; but the good temperament is able to stand all changes. Again, greatness

of soul is a virtue, and hard by it stands prodigality ; economy is a virtue, the being a good manager, hard by it stands parsimony and meanness. Come, let us again collate and compare the virtues with their vices. Well then, the prodigal person is not to be called great-minded. How should he ? The man who is overcome by numberless passions, how should he be great of soul ? For this is not despising money ; it is only the being ordered about by other passions : for just as a man, if he were at the beck and bidding of robbers, to obey their orders, could not be free, so it is here. His large spending does not come of his contempt of money, but simply from his not knowing how to dispose of it properly ; else, were it possible both to keep it and to lay it out on his pleasure, this is what he would like. But he that spends his money on fit objects, this is the man of high soul ; for it is truly a high soul, that which is not in slavery to passion, which accounts money to be nothing. Again, economy is a good thing : for thus that will be the best manager who spends in a proper manner, and not at random, without management. But parsimony is not the same thing with this. For the former indeed, not even when an urgent necessity demands, touches the principal of his money ; but the latter will be brother to the former. Well then, we will put together the man of great soul, and the prudent economist, as also the prodigal and the mean man ; for both of these are thus affected from littleness of soul, as those

others are from the opposite. Let us not then call him high-souled, who simply spends ; but him who spends aright : nor let us call the economical manager mean and parsimonious, but him who is unreasonably sparing of his money. What a quantity of wealth that rich man spent "who was clothed in purple and fine linen." But he was not high-souled ; for his soul was possessed by an unmerciful disposition, and by numberless lusts ; how then should it be great ? Abraham had a great soul, spending as he did for the reception of his guests, killing the calf, and, where need was, not only not sparing his property, but not even his life. If then we see a person having a sumptuous table, having his harlots and his parasites, let us not call him a man of a great mind, but a man of an exceedingly little mind. For see how many passions he is enslaved and subject to—gluttony, inordinate pleasure, flattery ; but him who is possessed by so many, and cannot even escape one of them, how can any one call magnanimous ? Nay, then most of all let us call him little-minded, when he spends the most ; for the more he spends, the more does he shew the tyranny of those passions ; for had they not excessively got the mastery over him, he would not have spent to excess. Again, if we see a person giving nothing to such people as these, but feeding the poor, and succouring those in need, himself keeping a mean table,—him let us call an exceedingly high-souled man ; for it is truly a mark of a great soul to

despise one's own comfort, but to care for that of others. For tell me, if you should see a person despising all tyrants, and holding their commands of no account, but rescuing from their tyranny those who are oppressed and evil entreated; would you not think this a great man? So let us account of the man in this case also. The passions are the tyrant: if then we despise them, we shall be great; but if we rescue others also from them, we shall be far greater, as being sufficient not only for ourselves, but for others also. But if any one, at a tyrant's bidding, beat some other of his subjects, is this greatness of soul? No, indeed; but the extreme of slavery, in proportion as he is great. And now also there is set before us a soul that is a noble one and a free: but this the prodigal has ordered to be beaten by his passions; the man then that beats himself, shall we call high-souled? By no means. Well then . . . but let us see what is greatness of soul, and what prodigality; what is economy, and what meanness; what is gentleness, and what dullness and cowardice; what boldness, and what forwardness: that having distinguished these things from each other, we may be enabled to pass this life well-pleasing to the Lord, and to attain unto the good things promised, through the grace and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom be the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

S. Chrysostom on the Acts of the Apostles. Hom. xlviii.

### Fourth Sunday in Advent.

WHO SHALL JUDGE. S. AUGUSTINE.

For, saith He, "the Father judgeth not any, but all judgment He hath given to the Son." A little while before, we thought that the Father doeth something which the Son doeth not; when He said, "The Father loveth the Son, and sheweth Him all things that Himself doeth:" just as if the Father were doing and the Son seeing. So there was stealthily creeping over our mind a carnal notion, as if the Father did what the Son did not, while the Son saw the Father shewing what was doing by the Father. Therefore as it seemed the Father was doing what the Son was not doing, now we see the Son doing what the Father doeth not. How He turns us to and fro, and keeps our mind on the move, leads us hither and thither, suffers us not to stay in one place of the flesh, that by plying He may exercise us, by exercising, cleanse us, by cleansing, make us capable, and when we are made capable, may fill us! What do these words make of us? What *was* He speaking? What *is* He speaking? A little before He was saying that the Father sheweth to the Son whatever He doeth; I saw, as it might be, the Father doing, the Son waiting to see it; now again I see the Son doing, the Father un-

employed. "For the Father judgeth not any, but hath given all judgment to the Son." When therefore the Son is to judge, shall the Father be unemployed and not judge? What is this; what am I to understand? Lord what sayest Thou? Thou art the Word of God, I am man. Sayest Thou that "the Father judgeth not any, but hath given all judgment to the Son?" I read in another place that Thou sayest, "I judge not any; there is One that seeketh and judgeth." Of Whom sayest Thou "There is One that seeketh and judgeth," but of the Father? He seeketh account of Thy wrongs, He judgeth for Thy wrongs. In what sense here, "The Father judgeth not any, but hath given all judgment to the Son?" Let us ask also Peter; let us hear him saying in his Epistle, "Christ suffered for us," saith he, "leaving us an example, that we should follow His steps; Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth; Who when He was reviled, reviled not again, when He took wrong, He threatened not, but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously." In what sense is it true, that "the Father judgeth not any, but hath given all judgment to the Son?" We are hardly bested here; being hardly bested, let us sweat over it, and by the sweat of our labour let us be cleansed. Let us exert ourselves as best we may, by His gift, to penetrate the deep secrets of these words. Belike we do rashly in that we wish to discuss and to search deep into the words of God. And why were they



spoken, but that they may be known? Why did they sound, but that they may be heard? Why were they heard, but that they may be understood? Then let Him comfort and make us strong, and bestow on us somewhat, so much as He vouchsafes; and if we do not yet penetrate to the fountain, let us drink of the rill. So, John himself as a rill hath flowed forth for us, hath conveyed to us from on high the Word, hath brought it low, and in a manner, levelled it, that we may not shrink with dread from Him that is high, but may draw nigh to Him that is low.

Without all question there is a sense, a true, a strong one, if in any wise we can lay hold of it, wherein to understand that "the Father judgeth not any, but hath committed all judgment to the Son." For the meaning is this: that in the Judgment there will appear unto men none other than the Son. The Father will be hidden, the Son manifest. In what will the Son be manifest? In the form wherein He ascended. For in the form of God, He is hidden with the Father; in the form of a servant is manifest to men. "Not" consequently, the "Father doth judge any, but all judgment He hath given to the Son;" howbeit, the manifest judgment; in which manifest judgment the Son will judge, because it is He that will appear to them that are to be judged. The Scripture doth more evidently shew us that it is He which shall appear. On the fortieth day after His resurrection He ascended into Heaven, in the

sight of His disciples ; and the Angelic voice said to them, " Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into Heaven ? This Jesus which is taken up from you into Heaven, will so come in like manner as ye have seen Him going into Heaven." In what manner saw they Him go ? In the flesh, which they touched, which they handled, the scars also of which, by touching, they proved, in that body in which He went in and out with them during forty days, manifesting Himself to them in verity, not in any falsity, not a phantom, not a shadow, not a spirit, but even as He said, using no deceit, " Feel and see ; that a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see Me have." True, that is now a Body worthy of an heavenly habitation, not subject to death, not mutable by the ages of man's life. For not as It had grown to that age from infancy, so from the age which was that of manhood, doth it verge downward to old age. He remains as He ascended, to come unto them to whom, ere He cometh, He willed His Word to be preached. So therefore will He come in human form : thus shall also the ungodly see ; shall see both they that are set on the right hand ; shall see also they that are separated on the left hand ; as it is written, " They shall look on Him Whom they pierced." If " they shall look on Him Whom they pierced," they shall see the selfsame Body which they smote with the spear ; the Word cannot be pierced with a spear ; that same, then, shall the ungodly be able to see which they were

able to wound. The hidden God in the Body they will not see. After the Judgment, *that* will be seen by them which shall be on the right hand. This then it is that He saith : "The Father judgeth not any, but hath given all judgment to the Son ;" in that the Son will come manifest to the judgment, in a human body appearing to men ; saying to them on the right, "Come ye blessed of My Father, receive the kingdom ;" saying to them on the left, "Go into everlasting fire, which is prepared for the devil and his angels."

Lo, it shall be seen—this Form of Man—by godly and ungodly, by just and by unjust, by believers and by unbelievers, by them that rejoice and by them that wail, by them that have confidence, and by them that have confusion ; lo, it shall be seen. When that Form shall have been seen in the Judgment, and the Judgment shall be finished wherein it is said, "the Father judgeth not any, but hath given all judgment to the Son ;" for this cause, namely, because the Son will appear in the Judgment in the Form which He hath taken of us ; what shall then be ? When shall be seen the Form of God, Which all believers thirst to see ? when shall be seen That Which was in the beginning, the Word, God with God, by Which all things were made ? when shall be seen that Form of God, of which the Apostle saith, "Being in the Form of God, He thought it not robbery to be equal with God ?" In might is that Form, wherein is still recognized the

equality of the Father and the Son. Ineffable It is, incomprehensible, above all, to the little ones. When shall It be seen? Lo on the right hand are the just; on the left are the unjust: the *Man* all alike see; the *Son* of Man they see: Him Who was pierced they see: Him Who was crucified, they see: Him, the humbled; Him, the born of a Virgin; Him, the Lamb of the tribe of Judah, they see: but the Word,—God with God,—when shall they see? He will be the Same then also, but the *form* of a servant will appear. The form of a servant will be shewn to the servants; the Form of God will be reserved for the sons. Then let the servants be made sons; they that are on the right, let them go to the eternal inheritance promised of old, which the martyrs, albeit not seeing, believed; for the promise of which, they, without hesitation, shed their blood: let them go thither and see there. When shall they go thither? Let the Lord Himself say; “So shall those go to everlasting burning, but the righteous into life everlasting.” Lo, He hath named life everlasting. Yea, but hath He told us withal that we shall there see and know the Father and the Son? What if we shall live for ever, but not see that Father and Son? Hear in another place where He hath named the life eternal, and hath expressed what is life eternal. Fear not, I deceive thee not; not without cause have I promised to them that are lovers of Me saying, “He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me, and he that loveth

Me, shall be loved also of My Father, and I will love him, and shew Myself to him." Let us make answer to the Lord and say, 'Nay, but O Lord our God, what great matter is that? What great boon? Wilt Thou shew Thyself to us? Why, even the Jews—can it be that to them Thou didst not shew Thyself—that even they who crucified Thee, did not see Thee?' Thou wilt shew Thyself in the Judgment, when we shall stand at Thy Right Hand; yea, but even those who shall stand at Thy Left Hand will they not see Thee? What is it, that "Thou wilt shew Thyself to us?" Do we not see Thee now, while Thou speakest? He answereth, 'I will shew Myself in the Form of God; ye see now the form of a servant: I will not disappoint thee, O faithful man! Believe that thou shalt see. Thou lovest, and dost not see. Shall very love not bring thee to see? Love; persevere in loving; I will not disappoint,' saith He, 'thy love; I Who have purified thine heart. For to what end have I made thine heart pure, but that it should be possible for thee to see God.' Because "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Yea, but this, saith the servant, as it were disputing with the Lord, 'Thou didst not express when Thou saidst, "The righteous shall go into life eternal," Thou saidst not, They shall go to see Me in the Form of God, to see the Father, with Whom I am equal.' Mark what He hath elsewhere said; "And this is life eternal, that they may know Thee, the

One True God, and Whom Thou hast sent, Jesus Christ." Even now therefore, after mention of the Judgment, which the Father, not judging any, hath given all to the Son, what shall be? What follows? "That all may honour the Son, even as they honour the Father." By the Jews the Father is honoured, the Son despised. For the Son was seen as a servant, the Father was honoured as God. The Son also will appear equal with the Father, "that all may honour the Son even as they honour the Father." Even now therefore we have this in faith. And let not the Jew say, 'I honour the Father; what have I to do with the Son?' Let Him make answer to him, "He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father." Thou liest altogether: thou blasphemest the Son, and dost wrong the Father. For the Father sent the Son, thou despisest Whom He sent: how honourest thou the Sender, who blasphemest the Sent?

'Lo,' saith some man, 'The Son is sent; and the Father is greater, because He sent!' Get thee away from the flesh; the old man suggesteth oldness; do thou in the New Man acknowledge newness. Let the new call thee off from the world of time; let Him, the Ancient, Perpetual, Eternal, call hereunto thine understanding. Is the Son less, because the Son is said to have been sent? I hear of sending, not separation. 'But this,' saith the objector, 'we see in the affairs of men, that greater is he that sends than he that is sent.' Yea; but the things of

men deceive man : the things of God purge him. Do not fix thy regard upon the things of men, when greater seemeth he that sends, less he that is sent : though indeed even the things of men bear testimony against thee. As, for example, if a person wishes to ask a woman to wife, and by himself is not able to do this, he sends a friend greater than he, to ask for him. And there are many cases where the greater is chosen on purpose to be sent by the lesser. Then why wouldest thou now make a quibble out of this, that the one did send, the other was sent. The sun sends his ray, and does not sever it ; the moon sends her shining, and does not sever it ; a lamp sheds its light, and does not sever it ; I see then a sending, and do not see any severing. For if from the things of men thou seekest examples, O heretical vanity, (albeit, as I said just now, even the things of men in some examples do argue and convict thee of error,) yet mark how different the case is in the things of men, from which thou wantest to draw examples for the things of God. The man who sends, himself stays behind, and that person goes who is sent. Does the man go with the messenger whom he sends ? But the Father Who sent the Son, did not quit the Son. Hear the Lord Himself saying, " Behold the hour will come, that every man shall depart to his own, and ye will leave me alone ; and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me." How sent He Him with Whom He came ? How sent He Him Whom He

quitted not ? In another place He hath said, " But the Father abiding in Me doeth His works." Lo, in Him He is, lo, in Him worketh. The Sender hath not quitted the Sent, because the Sent and the Sender are one.

S. Augustine, on S. John's Gospel, Hom. xxi.

### *Fourth Monday.*

#### JUDGING OURSELVES. S. GREGORY THE GREAT.

For the mind of every one ought anxiously to enquire into its pleas before God, and the pleas of God against itself. It should weigh carefully either what good things it has received from Him, or what an ill return it has made for His goodness by wicked living. And this the Elect never cease to do day by day. Whence Solomon well says, " The thoughts of the righteous are judgments." For they approach the secret chambers of the Judge, in the recesses of their own heart, they consider how sharply He smites at last, Who long patiently bears with them. They are afraid for the sins which they remember they have committed, and they punish by their tears the faults which they know they have



perpetrated. They dread the searching judgments of God even in those sins which they, perchance, cannot discover in themselves. For they see that that is observed by Divine Power which they, through human weakness, do not see in themselves. They behold the severe Judge, Who strikes a heavier blow the slower He is in coming. They contemplate also the assembly of the Holy Fathers seated with Him in judgment, and blame themselves for having slighted either their words or their examples. And in this secret chamber of inward judgment, constrained by the sentence of their own conscience, they chasten with penitence that which they have committed through pride. For they there count over whatever comes against and assails them. There do they crowd before their eyes every thing they should weep for. There do they behold whatever can be searched out by the wrath of the severe Judge. There do they suffer as many punishments as they are afraid of suffering. And in the sentence thus conceived in the mind, there is present every agency which is needed for the fuller punishment of those convicted by it. For the conscience accuses, reason judges, fear binds, and pain tortures. And this judgment punishes the more certainly, the more inward is its rage, because it does not come to us from any thing without. For when any one has begun to enter on this business of examination against himself, he is himself the prosecutor who arraigns, he is himself the accused who is arraigned. He

hates himself as he remembers himself to have been, and in the person of his present self persecutes his former self; and a contest is raised by a man in his mind against himself, bringing forth peace with God. This struggle of the heart the Lord required, when He said by the Prophet, "I attended and hearkened; no man speaketh what is good, there is no one that doth penance for his sins, saying, 'What have I done?'" He was appeased by this struggle of the heart, when He spake to this Prophet of king Ahab, reproving himself, saying, "Hast thou seen Ahab humbled before Me? therefore because he hath humbled himself for My sake, I will not bring the evil in his days."

Since then it is now in our power to undergo an inward judgment of our mind against ourselves, let us examine and accuse our own selves, and torture our former selves by penitence. Let us not cease to judge ourselves while it is in our power. Let us carefully attend to what is said, "For it is no longer in the power of man to come near to God for judgment." For it is a property of reprobates to be ever doing wrong, and never to repent of what they have done. For they pass over with blinded mind every thing that they can do, and do not acknowledge what they have done, except when they have been punished. But it is the custom of the Elect, on the other hand, to examine daily into their conduct from the very first springs of their thoughts, and to drain to the bottom whatever impurity flows

forth from thence. For as we do not notice how our limbs grow, our body increases, our appearance changes, our hair turns from black to white, (for all these things take place in us without our knowing it,) in like manner is our mind changed from itself by the very habit of anxiety every moment of our life, and we do not perceive it, unless we sit down to carefully watch our inmost condition, and weigh our advances and failures day by day. For in this life to stand still, is, in itself, to go back, as it were, to our old state, and when the mind is left undisturbed, it is overpowered by an old age, as it were, of torpor, because by neglecting itself, and by losing insensibly its proper strength, it wastes away unknown to itself from the appearance of its former power. Whence it is said by the Prophet, under the character of Ephraim, "Strangers have devoured his strength, and he knew it not, but even grey hairs are sprinkled on him, and he himself was ignorant of it." But when the mind inquires into itself, and examines itself carefully with penitence, it is renewed from this its old nature, by being bathed with tears, and kindled with grief. And though it had been well nigh frozen with the chill of age, it glows afresh by a supply of the zeal of inward love. Whence the Apostle Paul warns his disciples, who were growing old by contact with this mortal life, saying, "Be renewed in the spirit of your mind."

But both the examples of the Fathers, and the precepts of Holy Scripture, assist us much in acting

thus. For if we look at the doings of the Saints, and lend an ear to the Divine commands, the sight of the one, and the hearing of the other, inflames us. And our heart is not benumbed with torpor when it is urged on by imitation of them. Whence it is well said to Moses, "The fire on the altar shall always burn which the priest shall feed, putting wood on it every day in the morning." For the altar of God is our heart, in which the fire is ordered always to burn; because it is necessary that the flame of love should constantly ascend therefrom to God, and the priest should put wood thereon every day lest it should go out. For every one who is endowed with faith in Christ, is made specially a member of the Great High Priest, as Peter the Apostle says to all the faithful, "But ye are a chosen race, a royal priesthood." And as the Apostle John says, "Thou hast made us a kingdom, and priests, to our God." The priest therefore feeding the fire on the altar, must place fuel on it every day; that is, every faithful person must never cease to collect together in his heart as well the examples of those who have gone before, as also the testimonies of Holy Scripture, that the flame of love may not be extinguished within it. For to make use of either the examples of the Fathers, or the precepts of the Lord, in exciting our lives, is, as it were, to supply fuel to the fire. For since our new life within daily grows old by its very converse with this world, fire must be fed with a supply of

wood, so that while it wastes itself away by the habits of our own condition, it may revive by means of the examples and testimonies of the Fathers. And it is there rightly ordered, that wood should be thrown on every day in the morning. For these things are not done, unless when the night of blindness is extinguished. Or certainly, because the morning is the first part of the day, every one of the faithful must put aside the thoughts of this life, and consider in the first place that he must enkindle, by every means in his power, that zeal which is even now, as it were, failing within him. For this fire on the altar of the Lord, that is, on our heart, is speedily extinguished, if it is not carefully renewed by an application of the examples of the Fathers, and the testimonies of the Lord.

But it is rightly subjoined in this place, "And when the burnt offering is placed upon it, he shall burn the fat of the peace offerings." For whoever kindles within himself this fire of love, places himself upon it as a burnt offering, because he burns out every fault which wickedly lived within him. For when he examines the secrets of his own thoughts, and sacrifices his wicked life by the sword of conversion, he has placed himself on the altar of his own heart, and kindled himself with the fire of love. And the fat of the peace offerings smells sweetly from this victim, because the inward fatness of new love, making peace between ourselves and God, emits from us the sweetest odour. But since this

self-same love continues inextinguishable in the heart of the Elect, it is there fitly subjoined, "This is that perpetual fire which shall never go out on the altar." This fire in truth will never go out on the altar, because the glow of love increases in their minds even after this life. For it is the effect of eternal contemplation, that Almighty God is loved the more deeply, the more He is seen. . . .

Roused then by the voices of so many precepts, and aided by the comparison of so many examples, let us turn back to our hearts and examine carefully all our doings, and let us blame whatever within us offends against the will of Divine rectitude, in order that this very accusation may excuse us with our strict Judge. For we are the more quickly acquitted in this judgment of our conscience, the more strictly we regard ourselves as guilty; and we must not omit the opportunities which are afforded us for this purpose, because, after the season of this life, there is no time for so doing. For it is not indeed said without reason, "For it is no longer in the power of man to come near to God for judgment." For we are reminded of what we cannot do *then*, in order that we may not neglect *now* what we can do. But behold, engagements occupy our minds, and, from their constant contact with us, turn away the eye of our mind from self-consideration. For our mind is distracted by those visible things which it beholds, and when it is employed outwardly, it forgets what is going on in itself within. But the

Divine Voice pierces it with its terrible sentences, like so many nails, to keep it vigilant, that man may, at least when startled with fear, tremble at the secret judgments hanging over him, which he pretends not to see when overwhelmed by torpor. For as we said above, the mind is weighed down by being fatally accustomed to the habits of the old life, and is lulled as in sleep on these outward objects which it beholds; and after having once wasted its strength in seeking after visible things without, it has lost all its power for contemplating invisible things within. Whence it is now necessary that the mind, which is detached by visible objects, should be smitten with invisible judgments; and that, since it has laid itself low by its evil indulgence in these outward objects, it should seek at least, when smitten, that which it has forsaken. But behold, Holy Scripture transfixes drowsy hearts with a kind of dread, in order that they may not cling to those things which come to nothing without, but which have eternally ruined them within. It points out to us what is decreed by the secret sentence, in order that these outward things may not be too much thought of. It informs us what is doing above us, with regard to us, in order that we may turn the eyes of our heart from those outward and temporal objects, to the secret of the inward disposal.

S. Gregory the Great. *Morals of the Book of Job,*  
Book xxv.

### *Fourth Tuesday.*

#### THE EYE OF FAITH. S. AUGUSTINE.

YE know, holy brethren, full well as we do, that our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is the Physician of our eternal health ; and that to this end He took the weakness of our nature, that our weakness might not last for ever. For He assumed a mortal body wherein to kill death. And, "though He was crucified through weakness," as the Apostle saith, "yet He liveth by the power of God." They are the words too of the same Apostle ; "He dieth no more, and death shall have no more dominion over Him."

These things, I say, are well known to your faith. And there is also this which follows from it, that we should know that all the miracles which He did in the body, avail to our instruction, that we may from them perceive that which is not to pass away, nor to have any end. He restored to the blind those eyes which death was sure some time to close ; He raised Lazarus to life, who was to die again. And whatever He did for the health of bodies, He did it not to this end, that they should be for ever ; whereas, at the last, He will give eternal health even to the body itself. But because these things which were not seen were not believed, by means of these temporal things which were seen, He built up faith in those things which were not seen.



Let no one, then, brethren, deny that our Lord Jesus Christ doeth not those things now, and on this account prefer the former to the present ages of the Church. In a certain place, indeed, the same Lord prefers those who "do not see, and yet believe," to them who see, and therefore believe. For, even at that time, so irresolute was the infirmity of His disciples, that they thought that He, Whom they saw to have risen again, must be handled, in order that they might believe. It was not enough for their eyes that they had seen Him, unless their hands also were applied to His limbs, and the scars of His recent wounds were touched; that that disciple who was in doubt might cry out suddenly, when he had touched and recognised the scars, "My Lord and my God!" The scars manifested Him Who had healed all wounds in others. Could not the Lord have risen without the scars? Yes, but He knew the wounds which were in the hearts of His disciples, and, to heal them, He had preserved the scars on His own Body. And what said the Lord to him who now confessed and said, "My Lord and my God?" "Because thou hast seen," He said, "thou hast believed; blessed are they who do not see, and yet believe."

Of whom spake He, brethren, but of us? Not that He spake only of us, but of those also who shall come after us. For after a little while, when He had departed from the sight of men, that faith might be established in their hearts, whosoever believed, be-

lieved, though they saw Him not, and great has been the merit of their faith ; for the procuring of which faith they brought only the movement of a pious heart, and not the touching of their hands.

These things, then, the Lord did, to invite us to the faith. This faith reigneth now in the Church, which is spread throughout the whole world. And now He worketh greater cures, on account of which, He disdained not then to exhibit those lesser ones. For as the soul is better than the body, so is the saving health of the soul better than the health of the body. The blind body doth not now open its eyes by a miracle of the Lord, but the blinded heart openeth its eyes to the word of the Lord. The mortal corpse doth not now rise again, but the soul doth rise again which lay dead in a living body. The deaf ears of the body are not now opened ; but how many have the ears of their heart closed, which yet fly open at the penetrating word of God, so that they believe who did not believe, and they live well who did live evilly, and they obey who did not obey ; and we say " such a man is become a believer ;" and we wonder when we hear of them whom once we had known as hardened.

Why then dost thou marvel at one who now believes, who is living innocently, and serving God ; but because thou dost behold him seeing, whom thou hadst known to be blind ; dost behold him living, whom thou hadst known to be dead ; dost behold him hearing, whom thou hadst known to be deaf ?

For consider that there are who are dead in another than the ordinary sense, of whom the Lord spake to a certain man who delayed to follow the Lord, because he wished to bury his father ; " Let the dead," said He, " bury their dead." Surely these dead-buriers are not dead in body ; for if this were so, they could not bury dead bodies. Yet doth He call them dead ; where, but in the soul within ? For as we may often see in a household, itself sound and well, the master of the same house lying dead ; so in a sound body do many carry a dead soul within ; and these the Apostle arouses thus : " Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." It is the Same Who giveth light to the blind, and awakeneth the dead. For it is with His voice that the cry is made by the Apostle to the dead, " Awake, thou that sleepest." And the blind will be enlightened with light, when he shall have risen again. And how many deaf men did the Lord see before His eyes, when He said, " He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." For who was standing before Him without his bodily ears ? What other ears then did He seek for, but those of the inner man ?

Again, what eyes did He look for, when He spake to those who saw indeed, but who saw only with the eyes of the flesh ? For when Philip said to Him, " Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us," he understood indeed that if the Father were shown him, it might well suffice him ; but how

would the Father suffice him, whom He that was equal to the Father sufficed not? And why did He not suffice? Because He was not seen. And why was He not seen? Because the eye whereby He might be seen was not yet whole. For this, namely, that the Lord was seen in the flesh, with the outward eyes, not only the disciples who honoured Him saw, but also the Jews who crucified Him. He then who wished to be seen in another way, sought for other eyes. And therefore it was that to him who said, "shew us the Father and it sufficeth us," He answered, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip? He who hath seen Me, hath seen the Father also." And that He might, in the meanwhile, heal the eyes of faith, he has first of all instructions given him regarding faith, that so he might attain to sight. And lest Philip should think that he was to conceive of God under the same form in which he then saw the Lord Jesus Christ in the body, He immediately subjoined, "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me?" He had already said, "He who hath seen Me, hath seen the Father also." But Philip's eye was not yet sound enough to see the Father, nor consequently to see the Son Who is Himself Co-equal with the Father. And so Jesus Christ took in hand to cure, and with the medicines and salve of faith to strengthen the eyes of his mind, which as yet were weak, and unable to behold so great a light; and He said, "Believest

thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me ? ”

Let not him then who cannot yet see what the Lord will one day shew him, seek first to see what he is to believe ; but let him first believe, that the eye by which he is to see may be healed. For it was only the form of the servant which was exhibited to the eyes of servants ; because if “ He Who thought it not robbery to be equal with God ” could have been now seen as equal with God by those whom He wished to be healed, He would not have needed to “ empty Himself, and to take the form of a servant.” But because there was no way whereby God could be seen ; but whereby man could be seen *there was* ; therefore He Who was God was made man, that that which was seen might heal that whereby He was not seen. For He saith Himself in another place, “ Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” Philip might of course have answered and said, “ Lord, lo, I see Thee ; is the Father such as I see Thee to be ? Forasmuch as Thou hast said, ‘ He who hath seen Me, hath seen the Father also.’ ” But before Philip answered thus, or perhaps before he so much as thought it, when the Lord had said, “ He who hath seen Me hath seen the Father also,” He immediately added, “ Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me ? ” For with that eye he could not yet see either the Father, or the Son Who is equal with the Father ; but that his eye might be healed for seeing, he was to be

anointed unto believing. So then before thou seest what thou canst not now see, believe what as yet thou seest not. "Walk by faith, that thou mayest attain to sight." Sight will not gladden him in his home whom faith consoleth not by the way. For so says the Apostle, "as long as we are in the body, we are in pilgrimage from the Lord." And he subjoins immediately why we are still "in pilgrimage," though we have now believed; "For we walk by faith," he says, "not by sight."

Our whole business, then, brethren, in this life, is to heal this eye of the heart whereby God may be seen. To this end are celebrated the Holy Mysteries; to this end is preached the word of God; to this end are the moral exhortations of the Church, those, that is, that relate to the correction of manners, to the amendment of carnal lusts, to the renouncing the world, not in word only, but in a change of life; to this end is directed the whole aim of the Divine and Holy Scriptures, that the inner man may be purged of that which hinders us from the sight of God.

For as the eye which is formed to see this temporal light, a light though heavenly, yet corporeal, and manifest not to men only, but even to the meanest animals, (for, for this the eye is formed, to see this light;) if any thing be thrown or fall into it, whereby it is disordered, it is shut out from this light; and though it encompasses the eye with its presence, yet the eye turns itself away from, and is absent

from it ; and through its disordered condition is not only rendered absent from the light which is present, but the light to see which, it was formed, is even painful to it. So the eye of the heart too, when it is disordered and wounded, turns away from the light of righteousness, and dares not and cannot contemplate it.

And what is it that disorders the eye of the heart ? Evil desire, covetousness, injustice, worldly concupiscence ; these disorder, close, blind the eye of the heart. And yet when the eye of the body is out of order, how is the physician sought out, what an absence of all delay to open and cleanse it, that that may be healed whereby this outward light is seen ! There is running to and fro, no one is still, no one loiters, if even the smallest straw fall into the eye. And God, it must be allowed, made the sun which we desire to see with sound eyes. Much brighter assuredly is He Who made it ; nor is the light with which the eye of the mind is concerned of this kind at all. That light is Eternal Wisdom. God made thee, O man, after His Own Image. Would He give thee wherewithal to see the sun which He made, and not give thee wherewithal to see Him Who made thee, when He made thee after His Own Image ? He hath given thee this also ; both hath He given thee. But much thou dost love these outward eyes, and despisest much that interior eye ; for *that* thou dost carry about bruised and wounded. Yea, it would be a punishment to thee, if thy Maker

should wish to manifest Himself unto thee ; it would be a punishment to thine eye, before that it is cured and healed. For so Adam in Paradise sinned, and hid himself from the Face of God. As long then as he had the sound heart of a pure conscience, he rejoiced at the Presence of God ; when that eye was wounded by sin, he began to dread the Divine light ; he fled back into the darkness, and the thick covert of the trees, flying from the truth, and anxious for the shade.

S. Augustine, on the New Testament, (Serm. 58, Oxf. Tr.)

### **Fourth Wednesday.**

WHAT IS HAPPINESS. S. AUGUSTINE.

IN common, all philosophers in their studies, their enquiries, disputations, living, aimed at apprehending a happy life. This was the one ground of philosophizing ; but I suppose that the philosophers have this in common with us also. For if I were to ask of you why ye have believed in Christ, why ye have been made Christians ; every man answers me truly, "for a happy life." The aiming therefore after a happy life is common to philosophers and Christians. But where the thing as to which there is such agreement may be found, herein is the ques-



tion, from this point, the separation. For to aim after a happy life, to wish for a happy life, to desire a happy life, to long for it, to make pursuit for it, is, I suppose the case of all men. Wherefore I see that I have not said enough, that their aiming after a happy life is common to philosophers and Christians ; for I ought to say, common to all men, to all men whatsoever, good and bad. For both he who is good, is therefore good that he may be happy ; and he who is bad, would not be bad, if he did not hope that he might be happy thereby. As touching the good, the question is an easy one, that they are therefore good because they seek a happy life. As touching the bad, some peradventure doubt, whether they too seek a happy life. But if I could interrogate the bad, separate and divided from the good, and say, "Do you wish to be happy?" no one would say, "I do not wish it." For instance, suppose a thief ; I ask of him, "Why do you commit theft?" "That I may have," he says, "what I had not." "Why do you wish to have what you had not?" "Because it is wretched not to have." If then it is wretched not to have, he thinks it happy to have. But in this he is shameless and mistaken, in that he would be made happy by what is bad. For it is good to all to be happy. Wherein then is he perverse ? In that he seeketh good, and doeth evil. What seeketh he then ? How doth the desire of the bad aspire after the reward of the good ? A happy life is the reward of the good : goodness is the work ;

happiness is the reward. God enjoineeth the work, proposeeth the reward : He saith, " Do this, and thou shalt receive this." But that bad man answers us, " Unless I act badly I shall not be happy." As though one were to say, " I do not arrive at good, unless I am bad." Seest thou not, that good and bad are contraries ? Art thou seeking good, and doing bad ? Thou art running in a contrary direction ; when shalt thou reach the end ? Let us then leave these, perhaps it will be in place to return to them, when we shall have fulfilled what we have proposed touching the philosophers. For I imagine it was not without a meaning, that by means of them who were not aware of it, some good thing was done ; Divine Providence itself so ordering it, that whereas there were very many sorts of philosophers in the city of Athens, none conferred with the Apostle Paul but the Stoics and Epicureans. For when ye shall have heard what they held in their sects, you will see how that it did not happen without a meaning, that of all the philosophers they only should confer with Paul. For neither could he choose for himself the disputants whom he would answer, but Divine Wisdom, which governeth all things, brought these before him, in whom almost the whole ground of their dissension consisted. I will speak then briefly ; let the unlearned believe us ; let the learned judge of us. I suppose that I do not dare to lie to the unlearned, with the learned as judges ; especially seeing that I am speaking of something, wherein

both the learned and the unlearned may alike judge truly. This then I say first, that man consists of soul and body. I do not ask you here to believe, but I even ask you to judge. For I do not fear, lest as to this saying any one who knows himself, should judge unfavourably of me. Man then, as no one disputes, consisteth of soul and body. This substance, this thing, this person which is called man, seeketh a happy life ; this ye know too : nor do I urge you to believe it, but remind you that ye may acknowledge it. Man, I say, this no mean thing, surpassing all cattle, all things that fly, and all that swim, and whatsoever carrieth flesh and is not man, man, I say, consisting of soul and body, not a soul of any kind whatever, for beasts too consist of soul and body, man then, consisting of a reasonable soul and mortal flesh, seeketh a happy life. When man shall have come to know what thing makes a happy life, unless he hold it fast, follow it, claim it for himself, take it to him if he has the power, ask for it if he has a difficulty, he cannot be happy. The whole question therefore is, what makes a happy life ? Place then before your eyes the Epicureans, the Stoics, and the Apostle ; which I might also thus express, the Epicureans, Stoics, Christians. Let us first ask the Epicureans what thing makes a happy life ? They answer, " The pleasure of the body." Here now I ask you to believe, for I have judges. For whether the Epicureans do say this, do hold this, you do not

know, because you have not read those writings ; but there are here those who have read them. Let us return to those who are to be questioned. What say ye, Epicureans, what thing makes a happy life ? They answer, "the pleasure of the body." What say ye, Stoics, what thing makes a happy life ? They answer, "the virtue of the mind." Give heed with me, beloved, we are Christians, we are disputing with the philosophers. See ye why those two sects only were preserved to confer with the Apostle ? There is nothing in man, that appertains to his substance and nature, besides body and soul. In one of these two, that is, in the body, the Epicureans placed the happy life ; in the other, that is, in the soul, the Stoics placed the happy life. As far as appertains to man, if his happy life is from himself, nothing remains besides the body and soul. Either the body is the cause of a happy life, or the soul is the cause of a happy life ; if thou seek for any thing further, thou gettest out of man. Those then who placed man's happy life in man, could not any how place it elsewhere, save either in the body or in the soul. Of those who placed it in the body, the Epicureans held the first place ; of those who placed it in the soul, the Stoics held the first place. Lo, here they are, they confer with the Apostle ; has the Apostle any thing more than they ? Or must he necessarily consent to one of these two sects, so that he too should place the cause of a happy life either in the body, or in the soul ? Paul

would never place it in the body, for there is nothing great in this ; forasmuch as even the philosophers themselves, who have the best notions of the body, do by no means place the cause of happiness in the body. For the Epicureans have this same notion both of the body and of the soul, that they are both mortal. And what is more grievous and detestable, they say that the soul after death is dissolved before the body. "Whilst," they say, "after the breathing out of the spirit, the dead body yet remains, and the lineaments of the members endure for a while in their entireness, the soul, immediately it departs, is dissolved, beaten about as smoke by the wind." Let us not marvel then, that they placed the supreme good, that is, the cause of happiness, in the body, which they held to be better in them than the soul. Could the Apostle do so ? Far be it from him to place the supreme good in the body. For the supreme good is the cause of happiness ; yea verily the Apostle was grieved that some of the number of Christians chose the sentiment of the Epicureans—not men, but swine. For of this number were they who by "evil communications corrupted good manners," and said, "let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we shall die." The Epicureans conferred with the Apostle Paul : there are Christian Epicureans too. For what else are they who are daily saying, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we shall die ?" To what tends, "There will be nothing after death, for our life is the passing

of a shadow?" For they said amongst the rest, in the unrighteous thoughts of their hearts, "let us crown ourselves with rose-buds before they be withered; let there not be a meadow which our riot shall not pass over; let us leave tokens of joy, fulness in every place; for this is our portion, and our lot is this."

But with the Stoics perhaps the contention is not unbecoming. For lo, when one asks where they place the efficient cause of a happy life, that is, what in man makes a happy life? they answer, that it is not the pleasure of the body, but the virtue of the soul. What says the Apostle? does he assent? If he assents, let us assent. But he does not assent; for Scripture calls them back who trust in their own virtue. And thus the Epicurean, who places man's supreme good in the body, places his hope in himself. But so the Stoic, who places man's supreme good in the soul, places it, it is true, in the better part of man; but he too places his hope in himself. But both the Epicurean and the Stoic are men. "Cursed," therefore "be every one that putteth his trust in man." What then? Having now the three set before our eyes, the Epicurean, the Stoic, the Christian, let us ask each,—Say, Epicurean, what thing maketh happy? He answers, "The pleasure of the body." Say, Stoic. "The virtue of the soul." Say, Christian. "The Gift of God."

S. Augustine, on the New Testament. (Serm. C. Oxf. Tr.)

## Fourth Thursday.

GOOD WORKS. S. AUGUSTINE.

WHAT then? Ought no works to be placed before faith, so that before faith one may be said to do good works? No, for those very good works, so called, before faith, although they may seem to man worthy of praise, are nothing worth. To me they seem to be such, as great strength and the swiftest speed, out of the way! Let none then count his works before faith good; where faith was not, good works were not. For it is the intention that maketh the work good; faith that directs the intention. Attend not so much to what one doeth, as to what, in doing it, he hath regard, whither he is directing his arms which steer so excellently. For suppose a man to steer a ship right well, and yet to have lost his course; what avails that he holds the topsail bravely, moves it bravely, keeps the head to the waves, careth lest the sides be beaten in, hath so great strength that he turn the ship whither he will, and whence he will? And suppose it be said to him, Where goest thou? and he say, I know not; or say not, I know not, but, I am going to such a port; and yet goeth not to that port, but hurrieth on to the rocks: doth not such an one, the more he

seemeth to himself active and powerful in steering the ship, so much the more dangerously steer it, so as through haste to bring it to shipwreck at last ? Such is he who runs the best, out of the way. Were it not better, and more tolerable, that the pilot should be somewhat weaker, so as to direct the ship with some labour and difficulty, and yet hold his right and due course ; and that the other again should walk even somewhat slowly and feebly, yet in the way, than out of the way run bravely ? He then is the best who both holds the way, and walks well therein ; but he is next in hope, who though he halteth somewhat, yet not so much as to go astray, or stand still, but advances, though by little and little ; for haply there is hope that he will arrive whither, though slowly, he tendeth.

Therefore, brethren, by faith was Abraham justified ; but if works did not precede his faith, yet they followed it. For can thy faith be barren ? If thou art not barren, thy faith is not barren. Thou hast believed somewhat of evil, and in the fire of thy evil hast burned up the root of thy faith. Therefore hold fast thy faith and work. But thou sayest, The Apostle Paul said not this. Nay, this said the Apostle Paul, " Faith which worketh by love : " and in another place, " Therefore love is the fulfilling of the law : " and in another, " For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. " See if He does not will thee to work, who saith, " Thou shalt not commit



adultery, thou shalt do no murder, thou shalt not covet, and if there is any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour ; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law." Doth love permit thee to do any evil to him whom thou lovest ? But perhaps thou only doest no evil, and dost not further any good. Doth love then permit thee not to do whatever thou canst for him whom thou lovest ? Is not that love which prayeth even for enemies ? Doth he then desert his friend who blesseth his enemies ? Therefore if faith be without love, it will be without works. But lest thou think much of the works of faith, add unto it hope, and love, and think not what thou workest. Love itself cannot be empty. For what is there in any man that worketh at all, even to evil, except love ? Shew me the love that is empty, and doth no work. Uncleaness, adulteries, violence, murders, every luxury ; doth not love work these ? Therefore cleanse thy love : the water flowing into the draught, turn into the garden ; what desires it had for the world, the same let it have for the world's Creator.

Do we say unto you, Love nothing ? God forbid ! Dull, dead, hateful, miserable will ye be, if ye love nothing. Love, but look well what ye love. The love of God, the love of our neighbour, is called charity : the love of the world, the love of this life, is called covetousness. Let covetousness be bridled,

charity stirred up. For the very charity of him that doeth good works, gives him hope out of a good conscience ; for a good conscience produceth hope ; as an evil conscience is wholly in despair, so a good conscience is wholly in hope. And so there will be these three of which the Apostle speaketh, "faith, hope, charity." Also in another place speaketh he of three likewise, but instead of "hope" he has placed "a good conscience." "For the end of the commandment," said he. What is the end of the commandment? That by which the commandments are perfected, not whereby they are destroyed. For in one sense we say, The meat is ended ; in another, The coat is ended, which was being woven ; meat is ended, so that it be not ; a coat is ended so that it be made perfect : and yet both in this we say the end, and in that. Here then he calleth not that the end of the commandment, whereby, as it were, the commandments finish, but that whereby they are perfected and consummated ; not consumed.

The end then is for these three : "The end of the commandment," saith he, "is charity, out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned." Instead of hope, he placed a good conscience. For he hath hope who beareth a good conscience. But he whom an evil conscience pricketh, draws back from hope, and expects nothing for himself but condemnation. That he may then hope to reign, let him have a good conscience ; and that he may have a good conscience, let him believe and

work. That he believeth, is of faith ; that he worketh is of charity.

In one place, then, the Apostle begins from faith, " faith, hope, charity ;" in the other he begins from charity itself, " charity, out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned." We but now begin from the middle, from conscience itself, and from hope. Who wishes, I say, to have good hope, let him have a good conscience ; and that he may have a good conscience, let him believe and work. From the middle we go to the beginning and end ; let him believe, and work. That he believeth is of faith, that he worketh is of charity. How then saith the Apostle, that man is justified without works by faith ; when in another place he saith, " Faith which worketh by love ?" Let us then oppose not the Apostle James to Paul, but Paul himself to Paul, and say unto him, Here thou permittest us in some wise to sin with impunity, when thou sayest, " We conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." Then thou sayest, " Faith which worketh by love." How am I here made as it were secure, even if I have not worked ; but then seem to have neither hope nor faith itself aright, unless I have worked by love ? I hear thyself speak, O Apostle ; certainly, thou wouldest here commend unto me faith without works ; but the work of faith is love, which love cannot so be void, but that it must both work no evil, and work whatever it can of good. For what

doth love ? Depart from evil, and do good. This faith then without works thou commendest ; and in another place thou sayest, “ Though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.” If then, faith without charity profiteth nothing, but where charity is, needs must that it works, faith itself worketh by love. How then shall man be justified by faith without works ? The Apostle himself answers, for this cause said I this to thee, O man, lest thou shouldest seem as it were to presume of thy works, and for the merit of thy works to have received the grace of faith. Therefore presume not of works, before faith. Thou knowest that faith found thee a sinner ; although faith given made thee righteous, it found ungodly whom it made righteous. “ To him that believeth (saith he,) on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.” If the ungodly is justified, from being ungodly he becometh righteous : if from being ungodly he becometh righteous, what are the works of the ungodly ? The ungodly may boast indeed his works, and say, I give to the poor, I take nothing from any, I covet not another man’s wife, I do no murder, I do no wrong to any, that which is pledged with me, no man witnessing, I restore : all this he may say ; I ask whether he be godly or ungodly. And how am I ungodly, saith he, doing all these things ? Even as they of whom it was said, “ They served the creature more than the Creator, Who is blessed for

ever." How art thou ungodly? What if, for all these good works, thou either hope for that which is to be hoped for, but not from Him from Whom alone it is to be hoped for; or hope for that which is not to be hoped for, even from Him from Whom eternal life is to be hoped for? For thy good works thou hast hoped for some earthly happiness; thou art ungodly. That is not the reward of faith. A precious thing is faith, to a vile thing hast thou devoted it. Ungodly then art thou, and vain are those works of thine.

Though in good works thou mayest move thine arms, and seem to steer the ship exceeding well, thou art running on the rocks. What if thou hope for that which is to be hoped, that is, life eternal, but not from the Lord God, through Jesus Christ, through Whom alone eternal life is given, but think-est that thou canst arrive at life eternal through the host of Heaven, through the sun and moon, through the powers of the air, of the sea, of the earth, of the stars? Thou art ungodly. Believe in Him that justifieth the ungodly; that thy good works may be indeed good works: for neither call I them good, as long as they proceed not from a good root. What is this? Either thou hopest for life temporal from God the Eternal, or life eternal from devils; on either side thou art ungodly. Correct thy faith; direct thy faith aright, direct thy way aright; and if thou have good feet, walk on secure, run, thou holdest the way. The better thou runnest, the more

speedily wilt thou arrive. But perhaps thou haltest somewhat. At least wander not out of the way ; though but slowly, thou wilt arrive : stand not still ; turn not back ; go not astray.

What then ? Who are blessed ? Not they in whom God findeth no sin, for He findeth it in all ; for " all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." If, then, sins are found in all, it remains that none are blessed but they whose sins are forgiven.

This, then, hath the Apostle thus commanded ; " Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. And to him that worketh," that is, presumeth of works, and saith that for their merits the grace of faith is given him, " is the reward not reckoned of grace but of debt."

What is this, but that our reward is called grace ? If it be grace, it is given gratis. What meaneth ? It is given gratis ? Gratis is evident. Thou hast done nothing good, and yet forgiveness of thy sin is given thee. Thy works are considered, and are found all evil. If God should pay thee what is due to those works, He would surely condemn thee. " For the wages of sin is death." To evil works what is due ? What but condemnation ? To good works what is due ? The Kingdom of Heaven. But thou art found in evil works ; if that be paid thee which is thy due, thou must needs be punished. What befalls then ? God payeth thee not the punishment due, but giveth thee grace not due. He owed

ninety-nine just persons that need no repentance." And with much joyfulness do we hear, so often as we hear with what joy "the sheep which had strayed is brought back upon the shepherd's shoulder;" and "the goat is restored to Thy treasury, the neighbours rejoicing with the woman who found it;" and the joy of the solemn service of Thy house forceth to tears, when in Thy house it is read of Thy "younger son, that he was dead, and lived again; had been lost, and is found." For Thou "rejoicest" in us, and in Thy holy angels, holy through holy charity. For Thou art ever the same; for all things which abide not the same, nor for ever, Thou for ever knowest in the same way.

What then takes place in the soul, when it is more delighted at finding or recovering the things it loves, than if it had ever had them? Yea, and other things witness hereunto; and all things are full of witnesses, crying out, "so is it." The conquering commander triumpheth; yet had he not conquered unless he had fought; and the more peril there was in the battle, so much the more joy is there in the triumph. The storm tosses the sailors, threatens shipwreck; all wax pale at approaching death; sky and sea are calmed, and they are exceeding joyed, as having been exceeding afraid. A friend is sick, and his pulse threatens danger; all who long for his recovery are sick in mind with him. He is restored, though as yet he walks not with his former strength; yet there is such joy as was not when before he

walked sound and strong. Yea, the very pleasures of human life men acquire by difficulties, not those only which fall upon us unlooked for, and against our wills, but even by self-chosen and pleasure-seeking trouble. Eating and drinking have no pleasure, unless there precede the pinching of hunger and thirst. Men given to drink eat certain salt meats, to procure a troublesome heat, which the drink allaying causes pleasure. It is also ordered that the affianced bride should not at once be given, lest as a husband he should hold cheap whom, as betrothed, he sighed not after.

This law holds in foul and accursed joy ; this, in permitted and lawful joy ; this, in the very purest perfection of friendship ; this, in him "who was dead, and lived again, had been lost, and was found." Everywhere the greater joy is ushered in by the greater pain. What means this, O Lord my God, whereas Thou art everlastingly joy to Thyself, and some things around Thee evermore rejoice in Thee ? What means this, that this portion of things thus ebbs and flows, alternately displeased and reconciled ? Is this their allotted measure ? Is this all Thou hast assigned to them, whereas from the highest heavens to the lowest earth, from the beginning of the world to the end of ages, from the angel to the worm, from the first motion to the last, Thou settest each in its place, and realizest each in their season, every thing good after its kind ? Woe is me ! how high art Thou in the highest, and how



deep in the deepest ! and Thou never departest, and we scarcely return to Thee.

Up, Lord, and do ; stir us up, and recall us ; kindle and draw us ; inflame, grow sweet unto us ; let us now love, "let us run." Do not many, out of a deeper hell of blindness than Victorinus, return to Thee, approach, and are enlightened, receiving that "Light" which "they who receive, receive power from Thee to become Thy sons?" But if they be less known to the nations, even they that know them joy less for them. For when many joy together, each also has more exuberant joy ; for that they are kindled and inflamed one by the other. Again, because those known to many, influence the more towards salvation, and lead the way with many to follow. And therefore do they also who preceded them much rejoice in them, because they rejoice not in them alone. For far be it that in Thy tabernacle the persons of the rich should be accepted before the poor, or the noble before the ignoble ; seeing rather "Thou hast chosen the weak things of the world to confound the strong ; and the base things of this world, and the things despised, hast Thou chosen, and those things which are not, that Thou mightest bring to nought things that are."

S. Augustine's Confessions, viii. 3.

## Fourth Saturday.

TRUE GLORY. S. CHRYSOSTOM.

THAT is not glory which is on earth, the true glory is in heaven. But if any one would be glorified, let him be dishonoured. If he would obtain rest, let him suffer affliction. If any one would be for ever illustrious, would enjoy pleasure, let him despise temporal things. And that dishonour is glory, and glory dishonour, let us now set before us to the best of our power, that we may see what is real glory. It is not possible to be glorified upon earth ; if thou wouldest be glorified it must be through dishonour. And let us prove this in the examples of two persons, Nero and Paul. The one had the glory of this world, the other, the dishonour. How ? The first was a tyrant, had obtained great success, had raised many trophies, had wealth ever flowing in, numerous armies everywhere ; he had the greater part of the world and the imperial city subject to his sway, the whole senate crouching to him, and his palace too was advancing with splendid show. When he must be armed, he went forth arrayed in gold and precious stones. When he was to sit still in peace, he sat clothed in robes of purple. He was surrounded by numerous guards and attendants. He was called lord of land and sea, emperor,

Augustus, Cæsar, king, and other such high-sounding names as implied flattery and courtship; and nothing was wanting that might tend to glory. Even wise men, and potentates, and sovereigns trembled at him. For beside all this, he was said to be a cruel and violent man. He even wished to be thought a god, and he despised both all the idols, and the very God Who is over all. He was worshipped as a god. What greater glory than this? or rather what greater dishonour? For—I know not how—my tongue is carried away by the force of truth, and passes sentence before judgment. Meanwhile let us examine the matter according to the opinion of the multitude, and of unbelievers, and the estimation of flattery.

What is greater in the common estimation of glory than to be reputed a god? It is indeed a great disgrace that any human being should be so mad; but, for the present, let us consider the matter according to the opinion of the multitude. Nothing then was wanting to him that contributes to human glory, but he was worshipped by all as a god. Now in opposition to him let us consider Paul. He was a Cilician, and the difference between Rome and Cilicia all know. He was a tent-maker, a poor man, unskilled in the wisdom of those without, knowing only the Hebrew tongue, a language despised by all, especially by the Italians. For they do not so much despise the barbarian, the Greek, or any other tongue as the Syriac, and this has affinity

with the Hebrew. Nor wonder at this, for if they despised the Greek, which is so admirable and beautiful, much more the Hebrew. He was a man that often lived in hunger, often went to bed without food, a man that was naked, and had not clothes to put on; "in cold and nakedness," as he says of himself. Nor was this all; but he was cast into prison at the command of Nero himself, and confined with robbers, with impostors, with grave-breakers, with murderers, and he was, as he himself says, scourged as a malefactor. Who then is the more illustrious? The name of the one the greater part have never heard of. The other is daily celebrated by Greeks, and barbarians, and Scythians, and those who inhabit the extremities of the earth. But let us not yet consider what is the case now, but even at that time who was the most illustrious, who the more glorious, he that was in chains, and dragged bound from prison, or he that was clothed in a purple robe, and walked forth from a palace? The prisoner certainly. For the other, who had armies at his command, and sat arrayed in purple, was not able to do what he would. But the prisoner, that was like a malefactor, and in mean attire, could do every thing with more authority. How? The one said, "Do not disseminate the word of God." The other said, "I cannot forbear. The word of God is not bound." Thus the Cilician, the prisoner, the poor tent-maker, who lived in hunger, despised the Roman, rich as he was, and emperor ruling over all, who enriched so many

thousands ; and with all his armies he availed nothing. Who then was illustrious ? who venerable ? he that in chains was a conqueror, or he that in a purple robe was conquered ? He that standing below, smote, or he that sitting above was smitten ? He that commanded and was despised, or he who was commanded, and made no account of the commands ? He who being alone was victorious, or he who with numerous armies was defeated ? The king therefore so came off, that his prisoner triumphed over him. Tell me then on whose side you would be ? For do not look to what comes afterwards, but to what was then their state. Would you be on the side of Nero, or of Paul ? I speak not according to the estimate of faith, for that is manifest ; but according to the estimate of glory, and reverence, and pre-eminence. Any man of right understanding would say, on the side of Paul. For if to conquer is more illustrious than to be conquered, he is more glorious. And this is not yet much that he conquered, but that being in so mean a state he conquered one in so exalted a condition. For I say, and will not cease to repeat it, though bound with a chain, yet he smote him that was invested with a diadem.

Such is the power of Christ. The chain surpassed the kingly crown, and this apparel was shewn more brilliant than that. Clothed in filthy rags, as the inhabitant of a prison, he turned all eyes upon the chains that hung on him, rather than on the

purple robe. He stood on earth bound down, and stooping low, and all left the tyrant mounted on a golden chariot to gaze on him. And well they might. For it was customary to see a king with white horses, but it was a strange and unwonted sight to behold a prisoner conversing with a king with as much confidence as a king would converse with a pitiful and wretched slave. The surrounding multitude were all slaves of the king, yet they admired not their lord, but him who was superior to their lord. And he before whom all feared and trembled, was trampled upon by one solitary man. See then how great was the brightness of these very chains!

And what need to mention what followed after these things? The tomb of the one is nowhere to be seen; but the other lies in the royal city itself, in greater splendour than any king, even there where he conquered, where he raised his trophy. If mention is made of the one, it is with reproach, even among his kindred, for he is said to have been profligate. But the memory of the other is everywhere accompanied with a good report; not among us only, but among his enemies. For when truth shines forth, it puts to shame even one's enemies, and if they admire him not for his faith, yet they admire him for his boldness, and his manly freedom. The one is proclaimed by all mouths, as one that is crowned, the other is loaded with reproaches and accusations. Which then is the real splendour?

And yet I am but praising the lion for his talons, when I ought to be speaking of his real honours. And what are these? Those in the heavens. How will he come in a shining vesture with the King of Heaven! How will Nero stand then, mournful and dejected! And if what I say seems to thee incredible and ridiculous, thou art ridiculous for deriding that which is no subject for laughter. For if thou disbelievest the future, be convinced from what is past. The season for being crowned is not yet come, and yet how great honour has the combatant gained! What honour then will he not obtain when the Distributor of the prizes shall come! He was among foreigners "a stranger and a sojourner," and thus is he admired; what good will he not enjoy when he is amongst his own? Now "our life is hid with Christ in God;" yet he who is dead worketh more, and is more honoured than the living. When that our life shall come, what will he not participate? What will he not attain? On this account God made him enjoy these honours, not because he wanted them. For if when in the body he despised popular glory, much more will he despise it now that he is delivered from the body. Not only on this account has He caused him to enjoy honour, but that those who disbelieve the future may be convinced from the present. I say, that when the resurrection shall be, Paul will come with the King of Heaven, and will enjoy infinite blessings. But the unbeliever will not be convinced. Let him be-

lieve then from the present. The tent-maker is more illustrious, more honoured than the king. No emperor of Rome ever enjoyed so great honour. The emperor is cast out, and lies no one knows where. The tent-maker occupies the midst of the city, as if he were a king, and living. From these things believe, even with respect to the future. If he enjoys so great honour here, where he was persecuted and banished, what will he not be when he shall come hereafter? If when he was a tent-maker he was so illustrious, what will he be when he shall come rivalling the beams of the sun? If in so much meanness he overcame such magnificence, to whom at his coming will he not be superior? Can we avoid the conclusion? Who is not moved by the fact, that a tent-maker became more honourable than the most honoured of kings? If here things happened so beyond the course of nature, much more will it be so hereafter. If thou wilt not believe the future, O man, believe the present. If thou wilt not believe invisible things, believe things that are seen: or rather believe things which are seen; for so thou wilt believe things which are invisible. But if thou wilt not, we may fitly say with the Apostle, "We are pure from your blood;" for we have testified to you of all things, and have left out nothing that we should have said. Blame yourselves therefore, and to yourselves will ye impute the punishment of hell. But let us, my beloved children, be imitators of Paul, not in his faith only,



but in his life, that we may attain to heavenly glory, and trample upon that glory that is here. Let not any things present attract us. Let us despise visible things, that we may obtain heavenly things, or rather may through these obtain the others, but let it be our aim pre-eminently to obtain those, of which God grant that we may be all accounted worthy, through the grace and loving-kindness, &c.

S. Chrysostom, on 2 Timothy, Hom. iv.

## Christmas Eve.

No. I.

### THE COMING OF CHRIST. S. CYRIL OF JERUSALEM.

OUR Lord Jesus Christ comes from Heaven, and He comes with glory at the end of the world, in the last day. For this world shall have an end, and this created world shall be made new. For since corruption, and theft, and adultery, and every sort of sins, have been poured forth over the earth, and blood has been mingled with blood in the world, therefore that this wondrous dwelling-place may not remain filled with iniquity, this world shall pass away, that that fairer world may be made manifest. And wouldest thou receive the proof of this, out of

the express words of Scripture? Listen to Esaias, saying, "And the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll, and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig-tree." And the Gospel says, "The sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven."

Let us not sorrow, as if we alone died; the stars also shall die, and perhaps rise again. And the Lord shall roll up the heavens, not that He may destroy them, but that He may raise them up again more beautiful. Hear David the Prophet saying, "Thou, Lord, in the beginning, hast laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Thy Hands; they shall perish, but Thou remainest." But some one will say, Behold he says plainly that they shall perish. Hear in what sense he says they shall perish; it is plain from what follows: "And they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed." For as a man is said to "perish," according to that which is written, "The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart," and this, though the resurrection is looked for, so we look for a resurrection, as it were, of the heavens also. "The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood." And again, hear Christ saying, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away;" for the creature's are not equal in honour with the Master's words.

The things then which are seen shall pass away, and there shall come the things which are looked for, things fairer than these ; but as to the time, let no one be curious. For "it is not for you," He says, "to know the times and the seasons which the Father hath put in His own power." And venture not thou to declare when these things shall be, nor, on the other hand, abandon thyself to slumber. For He saith "Watch, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh." But seeing that it behoved us to know the signs of the end, and whereas we are looking for Christ, therefore that we may not be deceived and perish, nor be led astray by that false Anti-christ, the Apostles, moved by the Divine will, address themselves by a providential arrangement to the True Teacher, and say, "Tell us, when shall these things be, and what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?" We look for Thee to come again, but Satan is transformed into an angel of light ; put us therefore on our guard, that we may not worship another instead of Thee. And He, opening His Divine and blessed mouth, says, "Take heed that no man deceive you." And you, hearers, who now, as it were, see Him with the eyes of your mind, listen to him saying the same things to you likewise : "Take heed that no man deceive you." And this word exhorts you all to give heed to what is spoken ; for it is not a tale of things gone by, but a prophecy of things future, and which will surely come. We prophesy not, for

we are unworthy ; but we set before you the things which are written, and tell you the signs. Observe then which of them have already come to pass, and which yet remain, and make thyself safe.

S. Cyril, Catechetical Lectures, xv. 3.

## Christmas Eve.

No. II.

WATCHING. S. CHRYSOSTOM.

TRULY, nothing better than affliction not above measure ! What, think you, must have been their state of mind ? How full of delight ! Where now are those women, who sleep the whole night through ? Where are those men, who do not even turn themselves in their bed ? Seest thou the watchful soul ? With women, and children, and maid-servants, they sang hymns to God, made purer than the sky, by affliction. But now, if we see a little danger, we fall back. Nothing ever was more splendid than that Church. Let us imitate these, let us emulate them. Not for this was the night made, that we should sleep all through it, and be idle. To this bear witness the artisans, the carriers, and the mer-

chants, to this, the Church of God rising up in the midst of the night. Rise thou up also, and behold the choir of the stars, the deep silence, the profound repose ; contemplate with awe the order of thy Master's household. Then is thy soul purer : it is lighter, and subtler, and soaring, disengaged : the darkness itself, the profound silence, are sufficient to lead thee to compunction. And if also thou look to the heavens studded with its stars, as with ten thousand eyes, if thou bethink thee that all those multitudes who in the day time are shouting, laughing, frisking, leaping, wronging, grasping, threatening, inflicting wrongs without number, lie all one as dead, thou wilt condemn all the self-willedness of man. Sleep hath invaded and defeated nature ; it is the image of death, the image of the end of all things. If thou look out of window, and lean over into the street, thou wilt not hear even a sound ; if thou look into the house, thou wilt see all lying as it were in a tomb. All this is enough to arouse the soul, and lead it to reflect on the end of all things.

Here indeed my discourse is for both men and women. Bend thy knees, send forth groans, beseech thy Master to be merciful : He is more moved by prayers in the night, when thou makest the time for rest a time for mourning. Remember what words that king uttered, " I have been weary with my groaning : every night will I wash my bed, I will water my couch with my tears." However delicate a liver thou mayest be, thou art not more delicate

than he : however rich thou mayest be, thou art not richer than David. And again the same Psalmist saith, "At midnight I rose to give thanks unto Thee, for the judgments of Thy righteousness." No vain-glory then intrudes upon thee : how can it, when all are sleeping, and not looking at thee ? Then neither sloth nor drowsiness invades thee : how can they, when thy soul is aroused by such great things ? After such vigils come sweet slumbers and wondrous revelations. Do this, thou also the man, not the woman only. Let the house be a Church, consisting of men and women. For think not because thou art the only man, or because she is the only woman there, that this is any hindrance. "For where two," He saith, "are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them." Where Christ is in the midst, there is a great multitude. Where Christ is, there needs must Angels be, needs must Archangels also, and the other powers be there. Then ye are not alone, seeing ye have Him Who is Lord of all. Hear again the Prophet also saying, "Better is one that doeth the will of the Lord, than ten thousand transgressors." Nothing more weak than a multitude of unrighteous men, nothing more strong than one man who lives according to the law of God. If thou hast children, wake up them also, and let thy house altogether become a Church through the night ; but if they be tender, and cannot endure the watching, let them stay for the first or second prayer, and then send

them to rest : only stir up thyself, establish thyself in the habit. Nothing is better than that storehouse which receives such prayers as these. Hear the Prophet speaking, "If I remembered Thee upon my bed, I thought upon Thee in the dawn of the morning." But you will say, I have laboured much during the day, and I cannot. Mere pretext this and subterfuge. For however much thou hast laboured, thou wilt not toil like the smith, who lets fall such a heavy hammer from a great height upon the metal flying off in sparks, and takes in the smoke with his whole body ; and yet at this work he spends the greater part of the night. Ye know also how the women, if there is need for us to go into the country, or to go forth unto a vigil, watch through the whole night. Then have thou also a spiritual forge, to fashion there not pots or cauldrons, but thine own soul, which is far better than either coppersmith or goldsmith can fashion. Thy soul, waxen old in sins, cast thou into the smelting-furnace of confession : let fall the hammer from on high ; that is, the condemnation of thy words : light up the fire of the spirit. Thou hast a far mightier craft than theirs. Thou art beating into shape not vessels of gold, but the soul, which is more precious than all gold, even as the smith hammers out his vessel. For it is no material vessel that thou art working at, but thou art freeing thy soul from all imaginations belonging to this life. Let a lamp be by thy side, not that one which we burn, but that

which the Prophet had, when he said, "Thy law is a lamp unto my feet." Bring thy soul to a red heat, by prayer : when thou seest it not enough, draw it out, and mould it into what shape thou wilt. Believe me, not fire so effectual to burn off rust, as night prayers to remove the rust of our sins. Let the night-watchers, if no one else, shame us. They, by man's law, go their rounds in the cold, shouting loudly, and walking through lanes and alleys, oftentimes drenched with rain, and all congealed with cold, for thee and for thy safety, and the protection of thy property. There is he taking such care for thy property, while thou takest none even for thy soul. And yet I do not make thee go thy rounds in the open air like him, nor shout loudly and rend thy sides ; but in thy closet itself, or in thy bed-chamber, bend thy knees, and entreat thy Lord. Why did Christ Himself pass a whole night on the mountain ? Was it not that He might be an ensample to us ? Then is it that the plants respire, in the night, I mean ; and then also does the soul take in the dew even more than they. What the sun has parched by day, becomes cool again at night. More refreshing than all dew, the tears of the night descend upon our lusts, and upon all heat and fever of the soul, and do not let it be affected in any such way. But if it do not enjoy the benefit of that dew, it will be burnt up in the day time. But God forbid it should be so ! Rather may we all, being refreshed, and enjoying the mercy of God, be freed from the bur-



den of our sins, through the grace and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, with Whom to the Father together with the Holy Spirit, be glory, might, honour, now and ever, world without end. Amen.

S. Chrysostom, on the Acts of the Apostles, Hom. xxvi.

## Christmas Day.

### THE WORD BECAME FLESH.

S. AUGUSTINE.

THE mysteries and secrets of the Kingdom of God first seek for believing men, that they may make them understanding.

For faith is understanding's step ; and understanding, faith's attainment. This the Prophet expressly says to all who, prematurely and in undue order, look for understanding, and neglect faith. For he says " Unless ye believe, ye shall not understand." Faith itself then also hath a certain light of its own, in the Scriptures, in Prophecy, in the Gospel, in the lessons of the Apostles. For all these things which are read to us in this present time, are lights in a dark place, that we may be nourished up unto the day.

The Apostle Peter says, " We have a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts."

Ye see then, brethren, how exceedingly unregulated and disordered in their haste are they who like immature conceptions seek an untimely birth, before the birth ; who say to us, " Why dost thou bid me believe what I do not see ? let me see something, that I may believe. Thou biddest me believe whilst yet I see not ; I wish to see, and by seeing, to believe, not by hearing." Let the Prophet speak, " Unless ye believe, ye shall not understand." Thou wishest to ascend, and dost forget the steps. Surely, out of all order. O man, if I could show thee already, what thou mightest see, I should not exhort thee to believe. Faith then, as it has been elsewhere defined, is the " firm support of those who hope, the evidence of things which are not seen." If they are not seen, how are they evidenced to be ? What ! Whence are these things which thou seest, but from that which thou seest not ? To be sure thou dost see somewhat, that thou mayest believe somewhat ; and from that thou seest, mayest believe what thou seest not. Be not ungrateful to Him Who hath made thee see, whereby thou mayest be able to believe what, as yet, thou canst not see. God hath given thee eyes in the body, reason in the heart ; arouse the reason of the heart, wake up the interior inhabitant of thine interior eyes, let it take to its windows, examine the creature of God. For there is one within who sees by the eyes. For when thy thoughts within thee are on any other subject, and the inhabitant within is turned away,

the things which are before thine eyes thou seest not. For to no purpose are the windows open, when he who looks through them is away. It is not then the eyes that see, but some one sees by the eyes; awake him, arouse him. For this hath not been denied thee; God hath made thee a rational animal, set thee over the cattle, formed thee after His Own Image. Oughtest thou to use them as the cattle do; only to see what to add to thy body, not to thy soul? Stir up, I say, the eye of reason, use thine eyes as a man should, consider the heaven and earth, the ornaments of the heaven, the fruitfulness of the earth, the flight of the birds, the swimming of the fish, the virtue of the seeds, the order of the seasons; consider the works, and seek for the Author; take a view of what thou seest, and seek Him Whom thou seest not. Believe on Him Whom thou seest not, because of these things which thou seest. And lest thou think that it is with mine own words that I have exhorted thee, hear the Apostle saying, "For the invisible things of God from the creation of the world, are clearly seen by those things which are made."

These things thou disregardest, nor didst look upon them as a man, but as an irrational animal. The Prophet cried out to thee, and cried in vain, "Be ye not like to horse and mule, which have no understanding." These things I say, thou didst see, and disregard.

God's daily miracles were disesteemed, not for

their easiness, but their constant repetition. For what is more difficult to understand than a man's birth, that one who was in existence, should, by dying, depart into darkness; and that one who was not, by being born, should come forth to light? What so marvellous, what so difficult to comprehend? But with God easy to be done. Marvel at these things, awake; at His unusual works thou canst wonder; are they greater than those which thou art accustomed to see? Men wondered that our Lord God Jesus Christ filled so many thousands with five loaves; and they do not wonder that through a few grains, the whole earth is filled with crops. When the water was made wine, men saw it, and were amazed; what else takes place with the rain, along the root of the vine? He did the one; He does the other; the one that thou mayest be fed, the other that thou mayest wonder. But both are wonderful, for both are the works of God. Man sees unusual things, and wonders; whence is the man himself who wonders? where was he? whence came he forth? whence the fashion of his body? whence the distinction of his limbs? whence that beautiful form? from what beginnings? what contemptible beginnings? And he wonders at other things, when he, the wonderer, is himself a great wonder. Whence then are these things which thou seest, but from Him Whom thou seest not? But as I had begun to say, because these things were disesteemed by thee, He came Himself to do un-

sual things, that in these usual ones too thou mightest acknowledge thy Creator. He came, to Whom it is said, "Renew signs;" to Whom it is said, "Shew forth Thy marvellous mercies." For dispensing them He ever was; He dispensed them, and no one marvelled. Therefore came He, a Little One to the little, He came, a Physician to the sick, Who was able to come when He would, to return when He would, to do whatsoever He would, to judge as He would. And this, His will, is very righteousness; yea what He willeth, I say, is very righteousness. For that is not unrighteous which He willeth, nor can that be right which He willeth not. He came to raise the dead, men marvelling that He restored to the light a man who was in light already, He Who, day by day, bringeth forth to the light those who were not.

These things He did, yet was He despised by the many, who considered not so much what great things He did, as how small He was; as though they said within themselves, "These are divine things, but He is a man." Two things then thou seest, divine works, and a man. If divine works cannot be wrought but by God, take heed lest in this Man God lie concealed. Attend, I say, to what thou seest, believe what thou seest not. He hath not abandoned thee, Who hath called thee to believe; though He enjoin thee to believe that which thou canst not see. Yet hath He not given thee up to see nothing whereby thou mayest be able to believe

what thou dost not see. Is the creation itself a small sign, a small indication of the Creator? He also came, He did miracles. Thou couldest not see God; a man thou couldest: so God was made Man, and in One thou mightest have both what to see and what to believe. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." This thou hearest, and as yet seest not. Lo, He comes, lo, He is born, lo, He comes forth of a woman, Who made man and woman. He Who made man and woman was not made by man and woman. For thou wouldest peradventure have been likely to despise Him for being born; the manner of His birth canst thou not despise; for He ever was, before that He was born. Lo, I say, He took a body, He was clothed in flesh, He came forth from the womb. Dost thou now see? Seest thou now, I say?

I ask as to the flesh, but I point out as to that flesh something thou seest, and something thou seest not. So, in this very birth, there are at once two things, one which thou mayest see, and another thou mayest not see; but so that by this which thou seest, thou mayest believe that which thou seest not. Thou hadst begun to despise, because thou seest Him Who was born; believe what thou dost not see, that He was born of a Virgin. "How trifling a person," says one, "is he who was born!" But how great is He Who was of a Virgin born! And He Who was born of a Virgin brought thee a tempo-

ral miracle ; He was not born of a father, of any man, I mean, His father, yet was He born of the flesh.

But let it not seem impossible to thee that He was born by His mother only, Who made man, before father and mother. He brought thee then a temporal miracle, that thou mayest seek and admire Him Who is Eternal. For He Who "came forth as a Bridegroom out of His chamber," that is, out of the Virgin's womb, where the holy nuptials were celebrated of the Word and the Flesh : He brought, I say, a temporal miracle, but He is Himself Eternal, He is Co-eternal with the Father, He it is Who "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." He did for thee whereby thou mightest be cured, that thou mightest be able to see what thou didst not see. What thou despisest in Christ, is not yet the contemplation of him that is made whole, but the medicine of the sick. Do not hasten to the vision of the whole. The Angels see, the Angels rejoice, the Angels feed thereon and live ; whereon they feed faileth not, nor is their food minished. In the thrones of glory, in the regions of the heavens, in the parts which are above the heavens, the Word is seen by the Angels, and is their Joy ; is their Food, and endureth. But in order that man might eat Angels' bread, the Lord of Angels became Man. This is our Salvation, the Medicine of the infirm, the Food of the whole.

S. Augustine, Sermons on the New Testament.  
(Serm. 76, Oxf. Tr.)





